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Easter, 1916 Redux

by Wayne K. Chapman

This essay resonates with the first issue of *International Yeats Studies* in celebrating the centenary of Yeats's greatest national poem. Written in the aftermath of the Easter Monday (April 24) 1916 rebellion and published privately in England to mark the first anniversary of the uprising, *Easter, 1916* (Clement Shorter, 1917) occupies a conspicuous and frequently misunderstood place in the history of the Yeats canon. No less than five essays in *IYS* 1.1 (Fall 2016) addressed the poem in various respects, and two of those essays have extended the bibliographic record and circumstances related to the dating of the poem. Hence I will build particularly on the new insights of James Pethica, in "'Easter, 1916' at Its Centennial: Maud Gonne, Augusta Gregory and the Evolution of the Poem," and of Matthew Campbell, in "Dating "Easter, 1916."[1] Pethica's piece, significantly, is accompanied by an hitherto unpublished essay by Lady Gregory, "What Was Their Utopia?"[2] Without much fanfare, the date of the Shorter edition had been set aright even before this, correcting a long-held critical assumption that the printing must have occurred in late 1916.[3]

Today, more evidence exists to answer critics who have questioned Yeats's motives, including his patriotism, for delaying publication of this poem and at least two other poems of its type—"Sixteen Dead Men" and "The Rose Tree"—nearly contemporaries by date of composition yet delayed in publication until late-1920.[4] More about those poems anon. "Easter, 1916" met its first, broad, public audience in *The New Statesman* of 23 October 1920 and *The Dial* of November the same year, before being collected in the letterpress edition of *Michael Robartes and the Dancer* (Cuala, 1921). The reason for delay, indeed for extreme caution, was conveyed by Yeats when he advised Shorter to "Please be very careful with the Rebellion poem. Lady Gregory asked me not to sent it you until we had finished our dispute with the authorities about the Lane pictures" (*CL InteLex* 3204; see Foster, *Life* 2 64, and Chapman, *YPM* 84). Lloyd George had succeeded Herbert Asquith as prime minister, and both Yeats and Shorter were already vulnerable over their support for Roger Casement, executed for treason in August 1916. Lady Gregory was "afraid of [the poem's] getting about & damaging us & she is not timid," Yeats added. He was echoing much the same concern he had expressed to her at an earlier stage in the Lane controversy, when Lane was still alive, in August 1913, and the trouble was with the Lord Mayor of Dublin and the Corporation. She quotes from Yeats's letter of 26 August 1913 (*CL InteLex* 2248) in her book *Hugh Lane's Life and Achievement, with some Account of the Dublin Galleries* (London: John Murray, 1921), page 128:

> I do not want to say anything now because, of course, I would sooner have the pictures in a barn than not at all, but if it is finished we must make as good a statement as we can for the sake of the future. Ireland, like a hysterical woman, is principle mad and is ready to give up reality for a phantom like the dog in the fable.

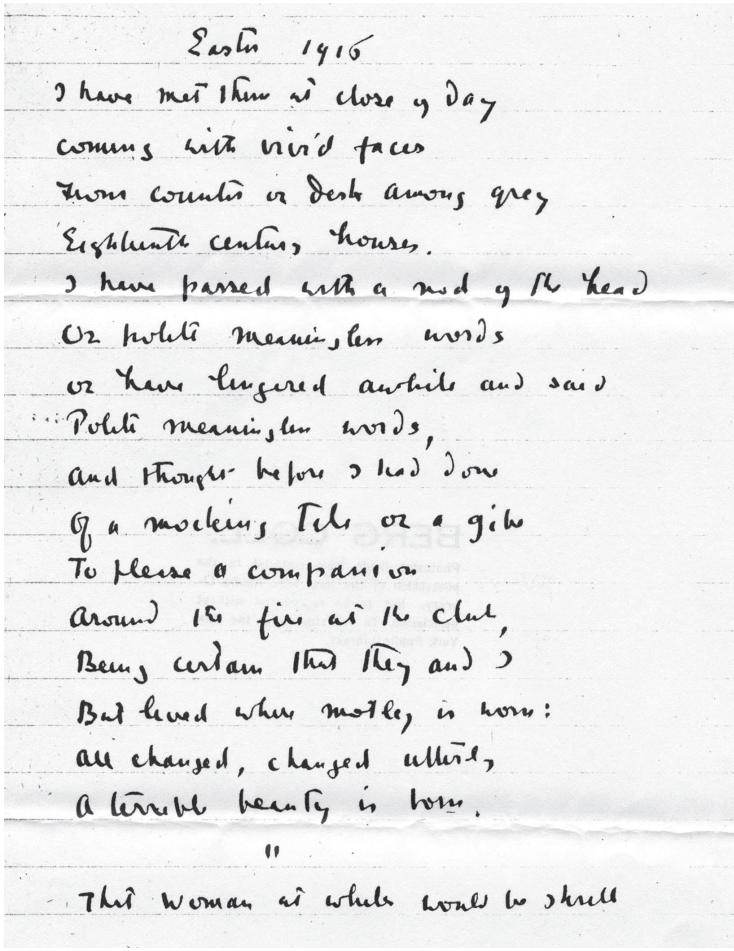
Following Yeats's remark that "[he] had not thought [he] could feel so bitterly over any public event," she presented in evidence, without title, his poem "September 1913," written "at The Prelude—Coleman's Hatch—Ashdown Forest / Sept. 1913" (on later authority of Mrs. Yeats; see Chapman, *YPM* 234). "September 1913" and "Easter, 1916" have become as mileposts, or as juxtaposed points used to gauge the development of Yeats's national feeling during this troubled time in his personal life and in Ireland's political history.[5] To varying degrees, Pethica, Campbell, and Armstrong have constructed arguments involving Clement Shorter's printing, although Pethica introduces far more new information in connection with Lady Gregory's significant influence on the making of the later poem from roughly May 1916 to precisely September 25, 1916, when he finished the early version at Coole Park with Lady Gregory and not, as long supposed, in Normandy with Maud Gonne. We know that a fair copy of stanza IV (headed "III"), dated "Sept. 1916," is preserved in Lady Gregory's copy of Yeats's *Collected Works* (1908), now housed in the New York Public Library (*CM* 260). We know that Emory University owns a 4-page autograph copy of the poem, untitled, "in the hand of Lady Gregory with additions and deletions" (MS Collection 600, Box 1, Folder 8; not listed in *CM*). And we know that she had text to read aloud when canvassing in support of the Lane pictures, in December 1916, among influential sympathizers such as Sir John Lavery for a possible appeal to King George and the royal family.[6] Now we learn from Pethica (*IYS* 1.1: 42) that Lady Gregory had made for herself a fair copy that she "kept in the second volume of her ballad books" and testified to its being "Copy before [the Shorter] printing—A. Gregory." Pethica dates this copy from a stop in London "possibly on or near 7 December," noting:

> This manuscript was in the possession of one of Lady Gregory's grandchildren when I first saw it in 1997. It…had been overlooked on the assumption that it was merely a copy she had made from the 1917 Clement Shorter printing of the poem.… However, it follows the working draft Yeats dated "Sept. 25 1916" [NLI 13,588 (6), 1^{r}–4^{r}], and clearly predates both the fair manuscript copy Yeats sent Shorter on 28 March 1917…and the first surviving typescript identified in George Yeats's hand as the "First-typed copy with W. B. Yeats's corrections in his own hand." [The Lady Gregory copy] bears one emendation in Yeats's hand to line 71 ("and died" becomes "are dead"). This parallels the change Yeats made on the fair copy he sent to Shorter. (Pethica 48 n. 55)

It seems apropos, therefore, to introduce a facsimile of the legible text that Yeats sent Shorter, on 28 March 1917, beneath a brief cover letter ("I have now copied out the Rebellion poem and enclose it"[7]) and cautionary postscript ("~~I wonder if you would not mind delaying~~. Please be very careful with the Rebellion poem. Lady Gregory asked me to send it you until we had finished our dispute with the authorities" etc.; unpublished ALS [369829B], Berg Collection, NYPL; cf. *CL InteLex* 3204). The enclosed, fair-hand manuscript (not reproduced in Parkinson's Cornell volume) is easy to read and is punctuated somewhat after corrections made on the first typescript (see further below), with a second, fairer typescript expected soon after for the Shorter printing.

Berg AMs, Signed

[1r]



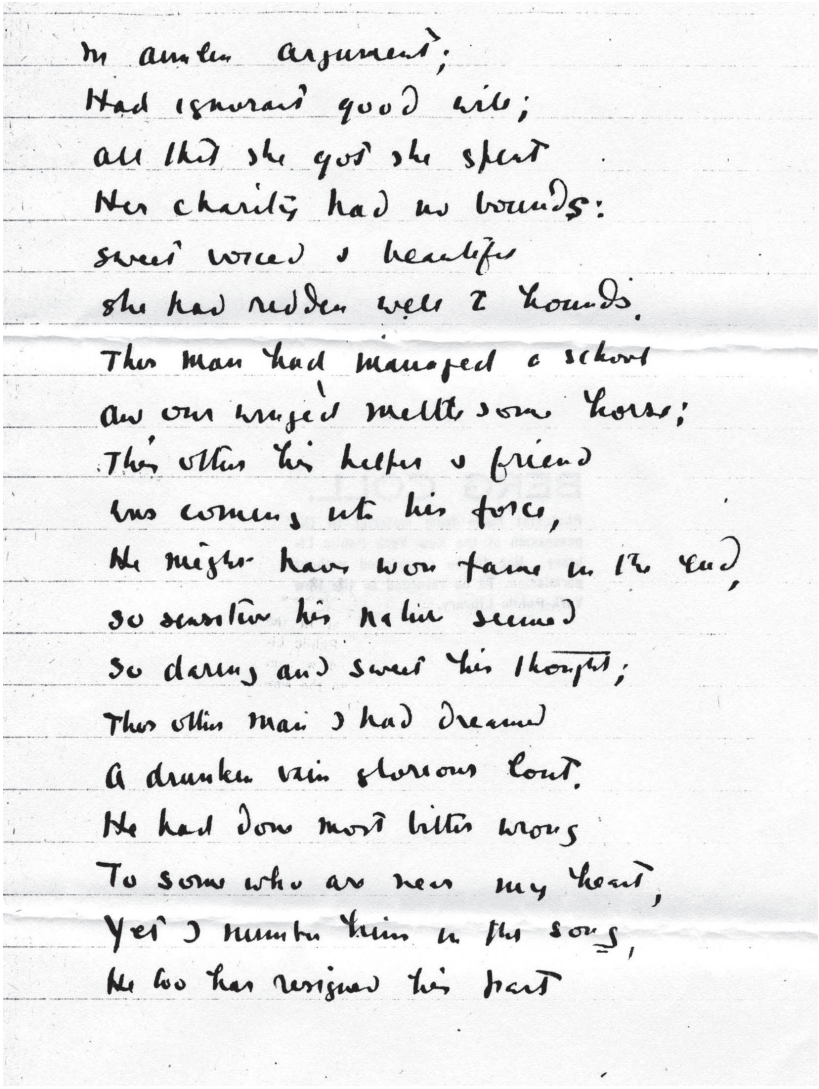
Easter 1916

I have met them at close of day
Coming with vivid faces
From counter or desk among grey
Eighteenth century houses.
I have passed with a nod of the head
Or polite meaningless words
Or have lingered awhile and said
Polite meaningless words,
And thought before I had done
Of a mocking tale or a gibe
To please a companion
Around the fire at the club,
Being certain that they and I
But lived where motley is worn:
All changed, changed utterly,
A terrible beauty is born.

"

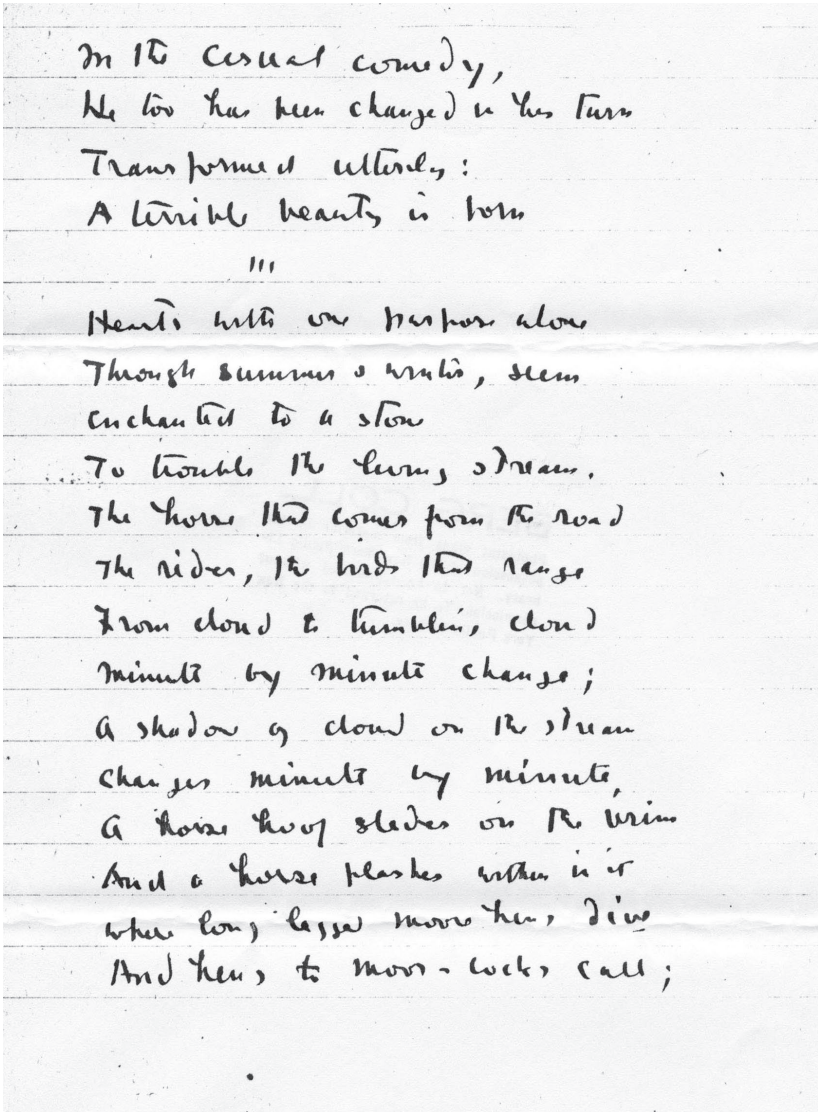
That woman at whom all would be shrill

[2r]



[Note: lines 17–23 are significantly variant—"That woman at whiles would be shrill…////// She had ridden well to hounds"; these seven lines would not be revised fully until 1920.]

[3r]

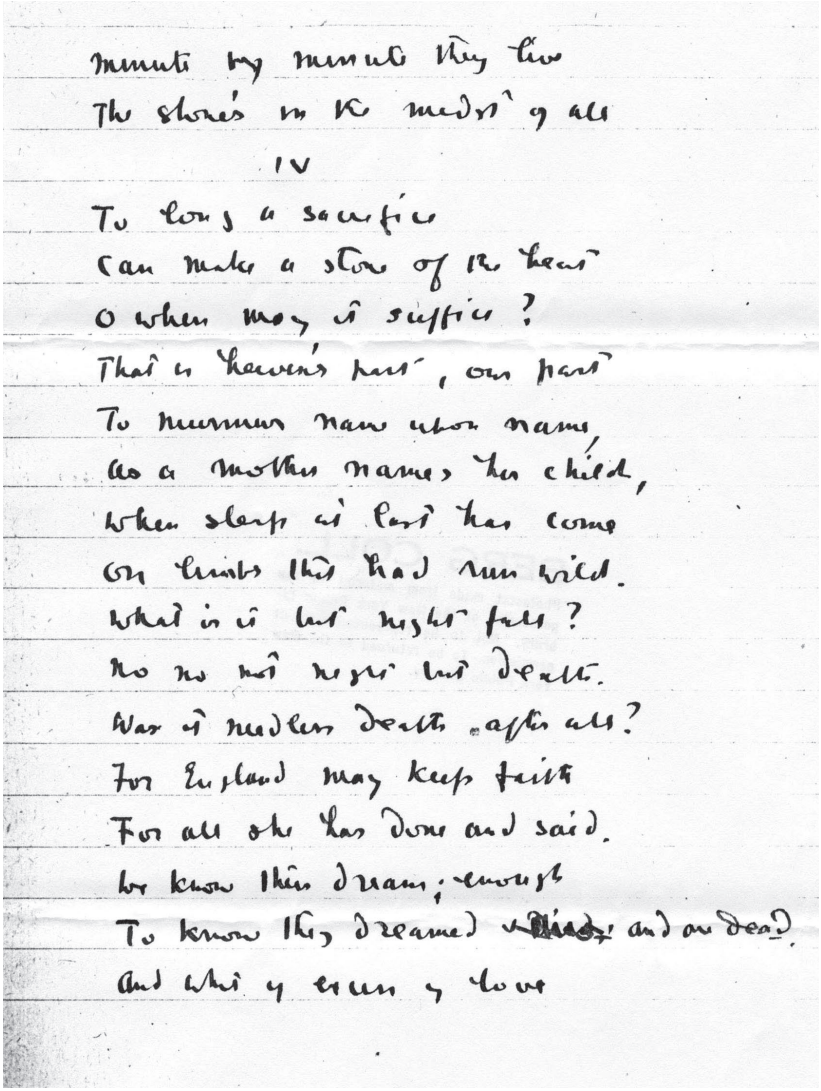

In the casual comedy,
He too has been changed in his turn
Transformed utterly:
A terrible beauty is born

III

Hearts with one purpose alone
Through summer and winter, seem
Enchanted to a stone
To trouble the living stream.
The horse that comes from the road
The rider, the birds that range
From cloud to tumbling cloud
Minute by minute change;
A shadow of cloud on the stream
Changes minute by minute,
A horse-hoof slides on the brim
And a horse plashes within it
Where long-legged moor-hens dive
And hens to moor-cocks call;

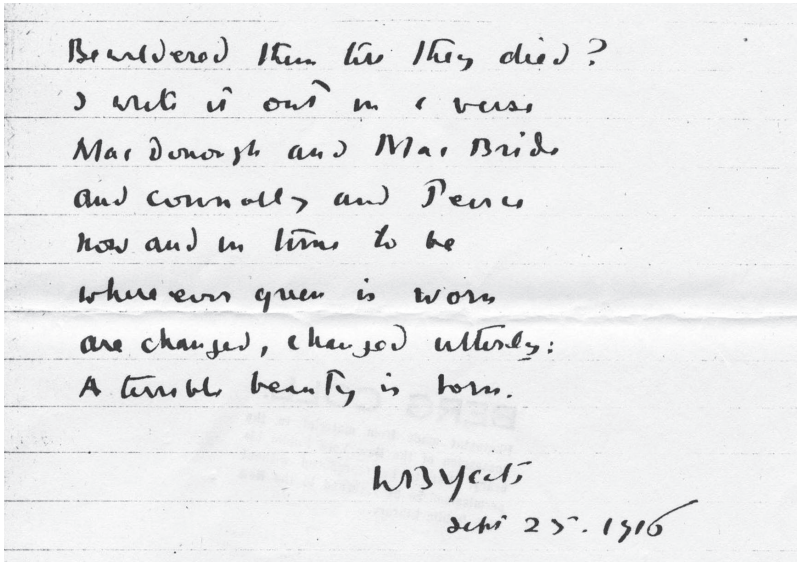
In the first typescript (HM 43250, below), line 53 here ("Where long legged moore hens dive") becomes "~~When~~ <Where> longlegged moorcocks dive"; however, the hyphenation of compounds wins preference as do "hens" over "cocks" in other typescripts made at that time, such as in the Yale typescript, as well as in Clement Shorter's 1917 printing.

[4r]



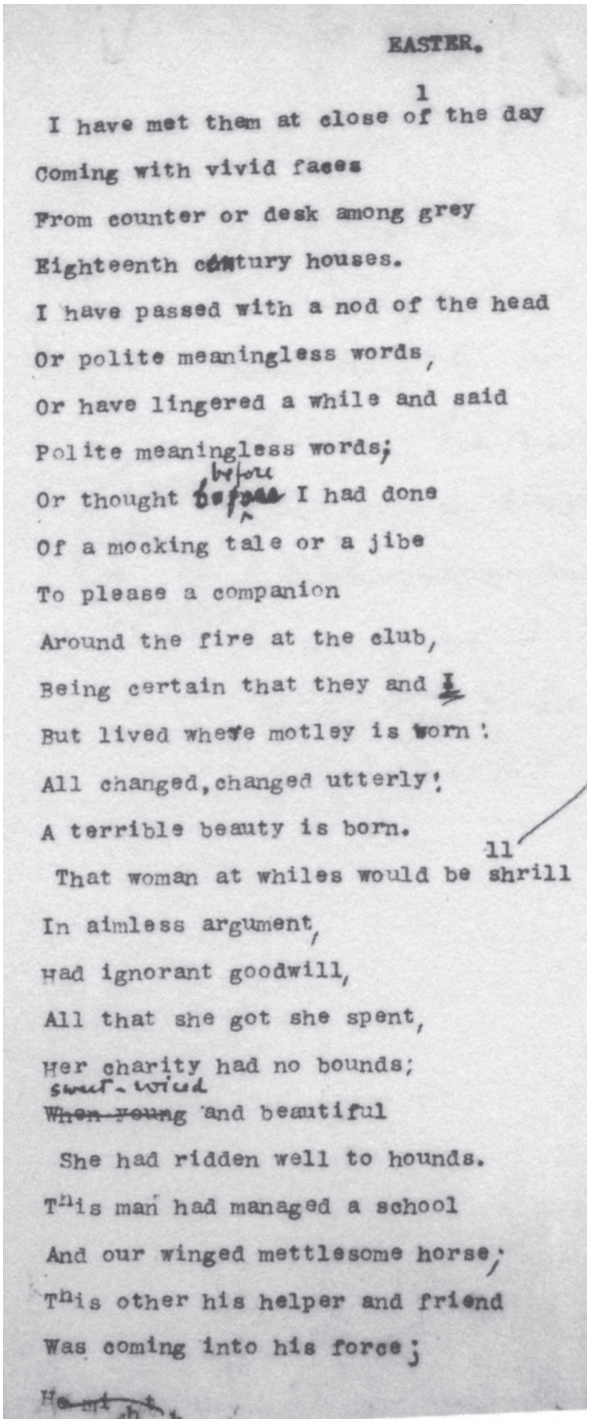
[Note, line 71 (above): "To know they dreamed & died." becomes "To know they dreamed and are dead." This revision compares with Pethica's observation in the newly discovered Gregory copy and in the John Quinn typescript at the Huntington Library (see below).]

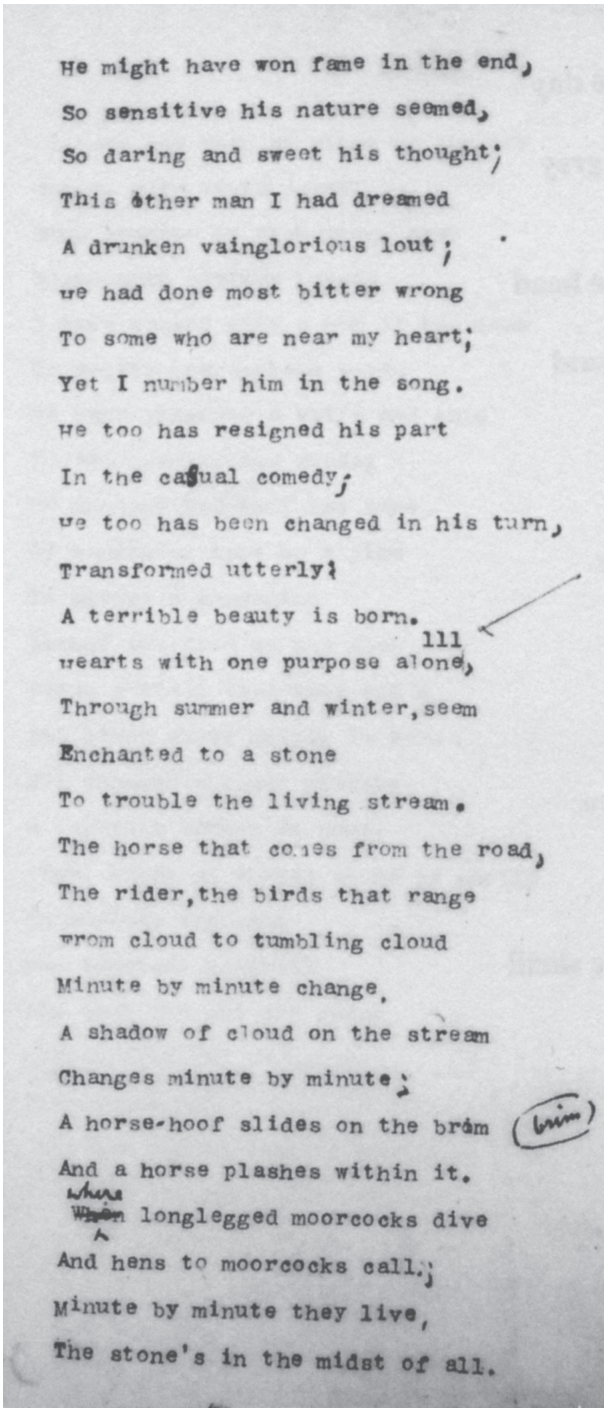
[5r]


Bewildered them like they died?
I write it out in a verse
MacDonagh and MacBride
And Connolly and Pearse
Now and in time to be
Wherever green is worn
Are changed, changed utterly:
A terrible beauty is born.

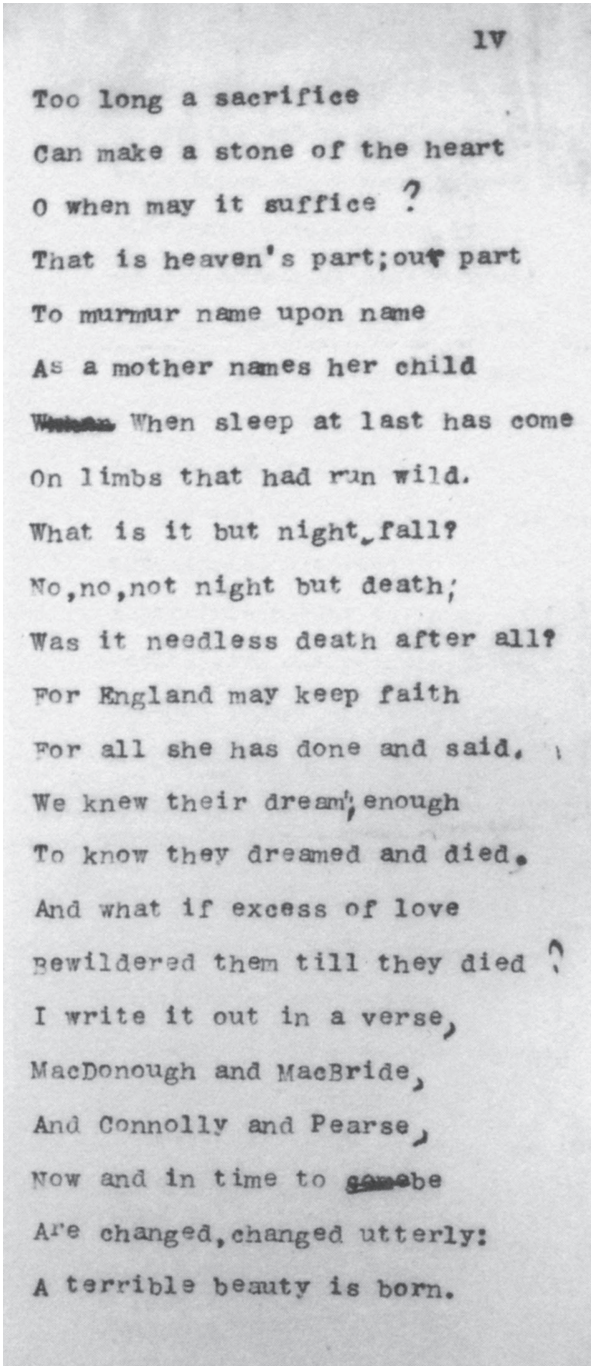
W B Yeats
Sept 25th. 1916

Berg AMs, Signed (referred to as NYP [2] by Parkinson) goes with several texts related to production and dissemination of *Easter, 1916* (1917), of which only 25 copies were printed for distribution to Shorter's friends, including a copy inscribed to "Lady Gregory from WB Yeats May 31 1917" (now in the Berg Collection, NYPL, with a copy of "The Rose Tree" enclosed without title) and a copy inscribed to "Ernest Boyd from WB Yeats June 22 1917" (at the Beinecke Library, Yale University). The latter bears correction to line 25 ("~~An~~ <And> our wingèd mettlesome horse") on the printed copy.[8] Next comes the annotated typescript "Easter," corrected throughout by Yeats (HM 43250), removed from John Quinn's copy of *Easter, 1916* (RB 129554), and bearing his bookplate. As a general rule, the typescript lacked end-line punctuation (and sometimes elsewhere) before Yeats added punctuation to the typescript, as well as corrected typos, revised lightly, and filled in a blank space to assist the typist with his handwriting. This obviously valuable typescript was chosen as a base-text by Parkinson, against which he collated differences he found in the holograph featured above, in the noted 1917 printed copies, and in ribbon and carbon copies of typescripts such as Yale (1), NLI 30,216 (2) and NLI 13,588 (6), uncorrected carbon copies of one used by Shorter, in two pages, and a three-page ribbon copy located at Sligo. These materials span production of the Shorter edition from its 28 March 1917 submission to at most 31 May but possibly just before 8 April 1917, which was Easter that year. NLI 30,216 (1) is a photostat of the original typescript at the Henry E. Huntington Library in San Marino, California. HM 43250 and RB 129554 are compared below.

HM 43250, John Quinn typescript, p. 1	Variants in Shorter 1917
	
EASTER.	*title*: Easter, 1916
1	*no numeral* I
I have met them at close of the day	of day [*lacking* the]
Coming with vivid faces	
From counter or desk among grey	
Eighteenth century houses.	Eighteenth-century
I have passed with a nod of the head	
Or polite meaningless words,	
Or have lingered a while and said	
Polite meaningless words;	words,
Or thought before I had done	Or] And
Of a mocking tale or a jibe	
To please a companion	
Around the fire at the club,	
Being certain that they and I	
But lived where motley is worn:	
All changed, changed utterly:	
A terrible beauty is born.	
II	*numeral* II *follows stanza*
That woman at whiles would be shrill	whiles] while
In aimless argument,	argument;
Had ignorant goodwill,	good will;
All that she got she spent,	
Her charity had no bounds;	bounds:
~~When young~~ sweet-voiced and beautiful	beautiful,
She had ridden well to hounds.	
This man had managed a school	
And our winged mettlesome horse;	An [*sic*]…wingèd…horse.
This other his helper and friend	
Was coming into his force;	
~~He~~	*no break intended*

HM 43250, John Quinn typescript, p. 2	Variants in Shorter 1917
	
He might have won fame in the end,	
So sensitive his nature seemed,	
So daring and sweet his thought;	thought.
This other man I had dreamed	
A drunken vainglorious lout;	drunken, vain-glorious
He had done most bitter wrong	
To some who are near my heart;	heart,
Yet I number him in the song.	song;
He too has resigned his part	He, too, has
In the casual comedy;	
He too has been changed in his turn,	He, too, has
Transformed utterly;	
A terrible beauty is born.	
III Hearts with one purpose alone,	*new stanza* III *follows* alone
Through summer and winter, seem	
Enchanted to a stone	
To trouble the living stream.	
The horse that comes from the road,	
The rider, the birds that range	
From cloud to tumbling cloud	cloud,
Minute by minute change,	
A shadow of cloud on the stream	
Changes minute by minute;	
A horse-hoof slides on the brim (brim)	brim;
And a horse plashes within it.	it
where When longlegged moorcocks dive	
And hens to moorcocks call;	call.
Minute by minute they live,	live:
The stone's in the midst of all.	*followed by stanza break*

HM 43250, John Quinn typescript, p. 3



IV

Too long a sacrifice
Can make a stone of the heart
O when may it suffice ?
That is heaven's part; our part
To murmur name upon name
As a mother names her child
When sleep at last has come
On limbs that had run wild.
What is it but night, fall?
No, no, not night but death;
Was it needless death after all?
For England may keep faith
For all she has done and said.
We know their dream; enough
To know they dreamed and died.
And what if excess of love
Bewildered them till they died ?
I write it out in a verse,
MacDonough and MacBride,
And Connolly and Pearse,
Now and in time to come be
Are changed, changed utterly:
A terrible beauty is born.

Variants in Shorter 1917

III

heart.

heaven's part,

name,

death.

had done

know

dreamed and are dead.

verse—

MacDonagh and MacBride

Pearse

be, / Wherever green is worn,

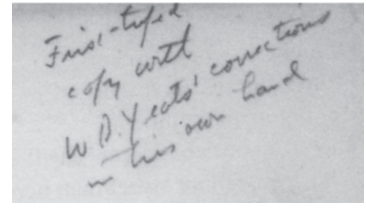
W. B. Yeats

Sept. 25, 1916.

Mr. Henry E. Huntington's source for these documents was the great public exhibition and auction of fellow collector John Quinn's library held on 11–13 February 1924. Together, they constituted item 11556 in the catalogue:

> Easter, 1916. 4to, limp green boards, uncut. In a half green morocco slip case. [London: Privately Printed, 1916]
> One of 25 copies privately printed by Clement Shorter for distribution among his friends, signed by him. Laid in is the first typed copy of the Poem, with autograph corrections by Mr. Yeats.[9]

The 1916 date is, of course, incorrect, an inferential error perpetuated by A. J. A. Symons in his 1924 bibliography of Yeats first editions,[10] but not by Allan Wade (see note 3). Clement Shorter was no help on dating when his privately printed autobiography of 1927 came out, because the bibliography of his books therein, "C. K. S. as Bookman," omitted *Easter, 1916* altogether, possibly because of Yeats's request to "be very careful with the Rebellion poem" while negotiating, in the transmittal letter of 28 March 1917, a private printing of several lyrics for copyright, soon to become *Nine Poems* (1918), which does appear in the Shorter bibliography.[11] In any case, the typescript enclosure in John Quinn's copy of *Easter, 1916* must have been sent to him sometime after Yeats's marriage on 20 October 1917, and perhaps after Yeats's first purchase of a typewriter for his wife's use later that same year.[12] George Yeats's inscription on HM 43250 (upper right-hand corner, p. 1) is consistent with their practice of sending Quinn manuscripts as in-kind payments for the care of J. B. Yeats in New York, up to the latter's death in 1922 and Quinn's own in 1924. Notably, the inscription heralds the "First-t[y]ped copy," wording eventually lifted and capitalized in the library sale catalogue.



George Yeats's inscription

Shorter was a sort of lesser rival to Quinn as a collector of modern authors. In a sense, the precedent for Shorter's privately printed *Nine Poems* (1918), and *Easter, 1916* itself, was *Nine Poems Chosen from the Works of William Butler Yeats Privately Printed for John Quinn and His Friends* (New York: Mitchell Kennerley, 1 April 1914; Wade 109), which included the poem "Romantic Ireland" (i.e., "September 1913"). Aside from his incredibly productive career as a journalist, biographer, literary critic, and political controversialist, Shorter had been an avid bibliophile since childhood, a collector who increasingly turned to privately publishing modern authors in limited editions. Both amiable and contentious, he was frequently a figure of satire in *Punch*. A friend to Thomas Hardy and George Meredith, his Irish wife, poet Dora Sigerson Shorter, drew

to his house writers such as Yeats (an old friend of hers), George Moore, and Bernard Shaw. Her vehement Irish nationalism stoked her husband's partisan sympathies on the rebel cause to the point where the Shorter home in Buckinghamshire defiantly flew the Irish flag. Unsuccessfully, Yeats, Shorter, and Arthur Conan Doyle started rival petition campaigns to persuade the English government to grant clemency to Roger Casement.[13] One upshot of such activity was that Yeats was at risk of losing his pension,[14] and, as he told Quinn, on 16 May 1917, he had decided to publish in the Cuala Press edition of *The Wild Swans at Coole* only "24 or 25 lyrics or a little more if the war ending enables me to add two poems I have written about Easter week in Dublin" (*CL InteLex* 3244). The two poems were probably "Sixteen Dead Men" and "The Rose Tree" (see note 4) because of Yeats's provision to publish through Shorter the limited edition of *Easter, 1916* or, if possible, to delay publishing it. Perhaps hastily or in the matter of course to secure copyright for Yeats in wartime, but with undoubted enthusiasm, Shorter donated a copy to the British Library on June 9, 1917, according to the accession date.[15]

Now regarded more for his piracies and misrepresentations in the collectors' market than for the respect he commanded as a bibliographical expert in his day, T. J. Wise advised Shorter on the printing of grangerized books (usually in small editions limited to 25 copies, ostensibly "not for sale") and eventually became involved in the affairs of the Clement Shorter estate in 1926.[16] Whether *Easter, 1916* (Ashley MS 2291) raised eyebrows in the British Library between mid-1917 and late 1920, or anyone noticed that it had been deposited for public viewing, is an open question to which we may never know the answer. But the pamphlet was definitely part of a series on the Irish rebellion undertaken by Shorter with the blessing of his wife, who contributed verses of her own to it. Assisted by Wise, the extensive but incomplete "Bibliography," compiled by Shorter protégé J. M. Bulloch and appended to the autobiography, includes George Russell's *Salutation: A Poem on the Irish Rebellion of 1916* (1917), contributions by Dora Sigerson [Shorter] of earlier date, not Yeats's *Easter, 1916* (1917), nor Mrs. Shorter's seven-page booklet *Poems of the Irish Rebellion 1916* (1916), yet includes the introduction to *A Discarded Defence of Roger Casement, suggested by Bernard Shaw, with an Appendix of Comments by Roger Casement* (1922) as well as *In Memorium Dora Sigerson* (1923) by Katharine Tynan and Eva Gore-Booth (see note 11).

Between the Quinn and Shorter printings of *Nine Poems* (1914) and *Nine Poems* (1918), respectively, fell the "pretentious pamphlet" *Eight Poems* (London, 1916). The inscribed copy in Yeats's library bears witness to the problem copyrighting his work posed during the war: "This pamphlet was brought out by a magazine called 'Form' to save my copyright as the poems were being published in America and the magazine was delayed."[17] The problem was clearly

nettling him as he tried to coordinate the diverse subjects of his writing with the variables of publication and finance. He had suggested as much, too, when conveying the holograph copy of "Easter 1916" to Shorter and proposing terms on other lyrics:

> I think the best thing for me to do is to try and place [the other poems] in America & give you half what I get there. "Poetry" always likes my work & would give me £15 or £20 but Watt may have something else offered there. If that is out of the question I shall try "The Seven Arts[,]" a new publication. Please do not publish for a little time as this will give me nothing if I lose copyright.[18]

Nine Poems did not appear until October 1918 although Shorter was content to publish three poems in *The Sphere*: "Broken Dreams" (on 9 June 1917), "The Wild Swans at Coole" (on 23 June 1917), and "In Memory" (on 18 August 1917).[19] In Ireland, for sake of comparison, his wife's most beloved lyrics were all written for "the Dark Rosaleen," or as Thomas MacDonagh had said in January 1916, poems such as "Ireland" and "Cean Duv Deelish."[20] After her death in 1918, it became customary to remember her for the poems she gave to the Easter Week rebellion. The 1916 insurrection, personal decline in illness, and the imminence of death (themes of *The Sad Years*) were coincident in these poems. She became, with Yeats, a participant in a relatively short-lived but important subspecies of Irish literature: the 1916 requiem lyric, so defined by Edna FitzHenry's *Nineteen-Sixteen: An Anthology* (1935), where their identically titled poems "Sixteen Dead Men" face each other at an opening.[21] When Dora Sigerson Shorter's posthumous collection *The Tricolour: Poems of the Irish Revolution* (or *Sixteen Dead Men* in America) came out in 1919, Yeats was still engaged writing lyrics on the uprising and beginning to see how a plan to publish them together might be executed.

Although Yeats had written to Quinn, on 23 May 1916, that he was "planning a group of poems on the Dublin rising" (*CL InteLex* 2960), his dealings were extensive with Clement Shorter and editors willing to pay the price Yeats wanted for a poem. The 1917 Cuala Press *Wild Swans at Coole* and the 1921 *Michael Robartes and the Dancer* reflect shiftings that were meant to keep certain poems out of the public purview in dangerous times. For the danger was real and potent, justifying the cost of artistic compromise. Even Lady Gregory regretted that the fortified Macmillan *Wild Swans at Coole* of 1919 might "have made a better and richer book if he had kept it back till he could put in his rebellion poems."[22] The dangers are especially telling in an exchange between Yeats and Shorter in early May 1918. Intending to give a lecture in Dublin on "recent poetry including war poetry," Yeats asked for and received all of Dora's

"privately printed rebellion poems" (*L* 648). Knowing that he should return praise for acts of generosity, Yeats wrote that her poems were "most powerful and most simple and touching when [about] Ireland…or herself"; then he told Shorter that he had put off his talk:

> Your wife's poems would have been my chief effect; [but] times are too dangerous for me to encourage men to risks I am not prepared to share or approve.… I doubt the priests and the leaders [are] able to keep the wild bloods to passive resistance. (*L* 648)

Arguably, "The Leaders of the Crowd" (1918–1919) and "On a Political Prisoner" (winter 1918–1919) were the last of the "group of poems on the Dublin rising" that he originally had in mind, giving four of five to the magazines in October/November 1920 and all five to *Michael Robartes and the Dancer* (1921).[23] "Easter, 1916" (with and without the medial comma, respectively, in *The New Statesman* and *The Dial*) appeared nearly simultaneously on both sides of the Atlantic on 23 October and November 1920. Notable preparations for these delayed printings included revising lines 17–23:

> Of late this woman spent
> From ignorant good will
> Her nights in argument
> Therefore her voice grew shrill
> What voice more sweet than hers
> ~~What voice more sweet than~~
> When young & beauty~~r~~iful
> ~~Ridding to harriers~~.
> She rode to harriers
> (NLI 13,588 (12), on verso of "To Be Carved on a Stone at Thoor Ballylee")

This revision was made, on George Yeats's authority, after the dedicatory poem was written for her at Ballinamantane sometime in 1918.[24] To follow would be the "TMs (original and carbon), with additions and corrections (Za Dial)" at Yale (*CM* 260), duplicative of NLI 13,588 (2) and 30,216 (2) and marked as proof copy for the printing of "Ten Poems" in *The Dial*; as well as NLI 30,209, which amounted to three marked sets of proofs for a volume of "New Poems," eventually entitled *Michael Robartes and the Dancer,* "Finished on All Soul's Day, 1920" (published February 1921, *Wade* 127)—but not necessarily in that order. Only the version in *The Dial* repeated the use of numerals from the Quinn typescript and the Shorter edition.

In more than fifty years following George Mayhew's analysis of the poem and its making,[25] so much has come to light as to justify the present revisiting of

the subject and to update facts when necessary. My own research on the poem goes back to the beginning of my career as a scholar, specifically undertaken in the Huntington Library roughly twenty-five years after Mayhew published his findings on HM 43250. So it is gratifying today that updating his account should actually occur on the centenary of the poem's first printing in 1917, and that returning to the subject, generally, should have such excellent company as provided by the maiden issue of *IYS* in the centennial year of the Easter Rising. Still, while much in the first two sections of Mayhew's study is misleadingly incomplete or incorrect in fact, context, or both, his appraisal of the poem in *exegesis* remains valuable reading. For example, he hears the influence of litany and catechism (63, 67), which anticipates Armstrong's discussion of "sacrificial rhetoric" (63–64) as informed by contemporary trauma studies. Perhaps the best point that Mayhew makes on the writing process, however, has to do with the relationship between the *oral nature* of the poem that Yeats wanted *heard* and that of the corrected typescript. Yeats's words were "deliberately typed with little or no interior or end-of-line punctuation, most of which Yeats later supplied, as was his custom,…[suggesting] a procedure…[in which] the poem was punctuated upon a musical…basis after being read aloud."[26] This "procedure" is important enough to avoid losing sight of it in transcription. Therefore, although glossed and annotated in this essay, the typescript and antecedent holograph have been allowed to tell their story in facsimile.

Acknowledgments

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Notes

1. Respectively, 30–48 and 54–59 in *IYS* 1.1 (fall 2016). In the same issue, the other commentaries on the poem are by Charles Armstrong, "'Easter, 1916' and Trauma" (60–65); Joseph Valente, "The Bioaesthetic of 'Easter, 1916'"(66–73); and Lucy MacDiarmid, "The Avian Rising: Yeats, Muldoon, and Others" (74–86).
2. Follows Pethica 49–53.

3. The *Wade* 117 listing occurs between *Responsibilities* (1916) and *The Wild Swans at Coole* (1917) but without attributing a date to *Easter, 1916* other than to acknowledge the one affixed to the end of the poem, "September 25, 1916." In Thomas Parkinson's introduction to W. B. Yeats, *Michael Robartes and the Dancer: Manuscript Materials* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), p. xix, the date of the edition is given as "the spring of 1917." Roy Foster avers that Yeats sent the poem in manuscript to Shorter in March 1917 (*Life 2* 64); and Wayne K. Chapman, first in *YA* 16 (2005) 81, then in *Yeats's Poetry in the Making: "Sing Whatever Is Well Made"* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 84—hereafter abbreviated *YPM*—argues that the "grangerized" edition of the poem was produced "in time for Easter Week 1917." That position is maintained here.
4. See Chapman, *YPM* 237, where "Dec. 17, 1916" and "April 7, 1917" are given for the writing of these two poems, which also appeared in *The Dial* of Nov. 1920 with rebellion poems "Easter 1916," "On a Political Prisoner" and "The Leaders of the Crowd"—the latter two written in winter 1918–1919. For instances of extremely mistaken critical speculation based on a misreading of bibliographic context, see *YPM* 308 n. 11.
5. Yeats made the same point, implicitly, while at work on the Easter elegy and appending the following observation of "July 1916," about "September 1913," to *Responsibilities* (1916 and 1917): "'Romantic Ireland's dead and gone' sounds old-fashioned now. It seemed true in 1913, but I did not foresee 1916. The late Dublin Rebellion, whatever one can say of its wisdom, will long be remembered for its heroism. 'They weighed so lightly what they gave,' and gave too in some cases without hope of success" (*VP* 820).
6. Chapman, *YPM* 83.
7. Yeats offered the poem as a possible substitute for "Presences," among several lyrics already sent for a projected book, having decided, by this time, to withhold the rebellion poem from the collection he planned for the Cuala Press, eventually entitled *The Wild Swans at Coole, Other Verses and a Play in Verse*, published on 17 Nov. 1917. For the full story, see Chapman, *YPM* 78–96 and *YA* 71–97.
8. Conrad Balliet (*CM* 16) incorrectly attributes enclosures of "Easter 1916" in MS to both the Gregory and Boyd copies, as well as Ashley MS 2291 in the British Library, when these bore copies of "The Rose Tree"(finished on "April 7, 1917"); see n. 4, above, and my review of *CM* in *YA* (1992) 392. As these three copies of *Easter, 1916* bore within them Yeats's most recent rebellion poem of that spring (written on the day before Easter), and as Ashley MS 2291 derived from Shorter himself, the private printing might have been coincident.
9. *The Library of John Quinn*, Part Five (New York: The Anderson Galleries, 1924), 1155.
10. A. J. A. Symons, *A Bibliography of the First Editions of Books by William Butler Yeats* (London: The First Edition Club, 1924), 33.
11. Clement Shorter, *C.K.S.: An Autobiography—A Fragment by Himself*, ed. J. M. Bulloch (London: privately printed by Constable & Company at the University Press, Edinburgh), 161–65.
12. See Chapman, *YPM* 215–16, 310 n. 15. The argument here is not that George Yeats was in this case the typist, only that the gift, according to Anne Yeats in conversation with the author, marked the beginning of Mrs. Yeats's secretarial service to the poet, including the production of "manuscripts" from expendable material valued by Quinn. Curtis B. Bradford, in *Yeats at Work* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1965), noted: "Inspection of such manuscripts from Quinn's library as I have run into strongly suggests that they had been, so to speak, 'concocted'" (389). On 16 May 1917, in fact, Yeats raised the prospect of bartering in manuscripts to relieve his father's debt to Quinn: "I wonder if you could give him the value of some MSS of mine (my ready money is not very abundant in war time)" (*CL InteLex* 3244).
13. Chapman, *YPM* 309 n. 12; Foster, *Life 2* 52.

14. Foster, *Life 2* 64.
15. 9 June 1917. See Campbell, *IYS* 1.1: 57; and Armstrong, *IYS* 1.1: 61. Symons (33) notes that the press mark of the British Library copy is "Tab 578.a.48."
16. Surely, the reason why so much of Shorter's literary collection wound up in the Ashley Library. See "Shorter, Clement (1857–1926)," *The 1890s: An Encyclopedia of British Literature, Art, and Culture*, ed. G. A. Cevasco (New York and London: Garland, 1993), 550–51.
17. The inscription in W. B. Yeats, *Eight Poems*, transcribed by Edward Pay (London: Published by "Form" at the Morland Press, 1916) is quoted in Edward O'Shea, A *Descriptive Catalog of W. B. Yeats's Library* (New York and London: Garland, 1985), 328. A partial inscription is given by Balliet (*CM* 16–17), who quotes other inscriptions laid in similar tone.
18. ALS, 28 March [1917]; see full text in *CL InteLex* 3204.
19. See the figure in Chapman, *YPM* 94–95.
20. Thomas MacDonagh, *Literature in Ireland: Studies Irish and Anglo-Irish* (Dublin: Talbot Press, 1916), 238. According to the Ashley Library catalogue, poet and sculptor Dora Shorter was also responsible for producing *A series of twelve Broadside Poems and Leaflets* (privately printed by her during the years 1916–1917). Such poems and leaflets as "God Save Ireland," "Irishmen," "Atrocities," and "Irish Women" were composed for the small printing studio she operated at 16 Marlborough Place, St. John's Wood, N.W., where typesetting and printing were entirely the work of her own hands. See "Shorter, Dora (1866–1918)," *The 1890s: An Encyclopedia of British Literature, Art, and Culture*, ed. G. A. Cevasco (New York and London: Garland, 1993), 551–52.
21. Edna C. FitzHenry, ed., *Nineteen-Sixteen: An Anthology* (Dublin: Browne and Nolan; London: George G. Harrap, 1935), 56–57. Coincidentally, Christine Kinealy recently featured Dora Sigerson Shorter and Yeats at the end of Kinealy's "The Poets' Revolution," in the 1916 Special Commemorative Issue of *Irish America* (Feb./Mar. 2016) 98–100, where images of the two poets are juxtaposed and first and last stanzas from Dora Shorter's "Sixteen Dead Men" are quoted with a similarly generous excerpt from her requiem lyric "The Choice," written in memory of Roger Casement and the unsuccessful effort that she, Clement Shorter, Arthur Conan Doyle, Shaw, and Yeats had made to rescue Casement from hanging.
22. Isabella Augusta Gregory, *Lady Gregory's Journals*, vol. 1: *Books One to Twenty-Nine, 10 October 1916–24 February 1925*, ed. Daniel Murphy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 66.
23. Four or five rebellion poems might have been about the right number if Yeats had in mind a private printing of only 25 copies for Shorter's friends. A copy of Dora Shorter's *Poems of the Irish Rebellion* was inscribed and sent to Yeats by Clement Shorter on "Dec 10, 1916" (NLI 30,692), and consisted of five poems: "The Hill-side Men," "Conscription," "The Choice," "Sixteen Dead Men," and "The Sacred Fire." Yeats's own "Sixteen Dead Men" was written a week later, on 17 Dec. 1916 (Chapman, *YPM* 237).
24. Chapman, *YPM* 238.
25. George Mayhew, "A Corrected Typescript of Yeats's 'Easter 1916,'" *Huntington Library Quarterly* 27.1 (1963) 53–71.
26. Mayhew, "A Corrected Typescript" 58.

Yeats's Disappointments

Francis O'Gorman

William Butler Yeats is, distinctively, a poet of disappointment. That is, of course, a disappointing comment to make since it is, at least on the surface, hardly an obscure one. Yeats's histories of disappointment do not disappoint, even in miniatures:

> Come play with me;
> Why should you run
> Through the shaking tree
> As though I'd a gun
> To strike you dead?
> When all I would do
> Is to scratch your head
> And let you go. ("To a Squirrel at Kyle-Na-No," *VP* 359)

Such local disappointments—a squirrel's unsurprising disinclination to be friendly—are condensed versions, hints of the larger patterns, of intellectual, sexual, national, and aesthetic disappointment from which Yeats made the substance of his poetry. He was disappointed that his plans for recreating "the old foundations of life" through retelling of the ancient legends of Ireland failed, to his mind at least.[1] Such precious things became defiled by the passing dogs: the men who did not care and could see no point, no ancient ways. Yeats was let down by those who hated J. M. Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907); disappointed in the wealthy man who promised a second subscription to the Dublin Municipal Gallery; disappointed that Romantic Ireland was dead and gone; disappointed, if also proud, to be one of the last romantics. Yeats made of things that did not work out work itself.

"We live by Admiration, Hope, and Love," William Wordsworth said in the "Despondency Corrected" portion of *The Excursion* (1814).[2] But Yeats made poetry of hope's unfulfilled expectations, of the argument of a poet with a future that had not been realized as expected. Maud Gonne was a disappointment: a long erotic history without intimacy, mutuality, returns. To "disappoint" began in the late fifteenth century as an inversion, a reversal of that to which one had been "appointed." To disappoint was an act of dispossession.[3] But Yeats's daughter Anne was, the poet hoped, to be possessed of qualities in a fight-back against that etymology. She was to believe, as "A Prayer for my Daughter" from *Michael Robartes and the Dancer* (1921) phrases it, that "opinions are accursed" and in turn to be saved from the fate of the "loveliest woman born," Maud

Gonne, who had given away her beauty to popular folly (*VP* 405). Yeats's best parental blessing was to try to avoid disappointment, to appoint his daughter to the security of being unexceptional.

Disappointment is infrequently angry in Yeats. It is not motivating, either, for it inspires no attempts to essay again, to try once more, even to the palest extent of Samuel Beckett's "Fail again. Fail better."[4] Yeats's eye is on a future that turns out differently from expected just as he is the narrator of histories that prove to take disappointing directions, to fail to follow the route that had been hoped. But it is easy to underestimate how far Yeats makes poetry not merely out of the narratives of disappointment but, so to speak, its textures. He is interested in what disappointment *feels* like and *sounds* like as it is read in, or through, poetry; how patterns of words do not merely describe or reflect on disappointment but, in the subtlest and most suggestive ways, effect it. Yeats—to confuse etymology—is a poet who has taken possession of disappointment and made aesthetic objects out of strange and thoughtful transformations of what, in the bluntest terms, are let downs. Yeats, certainly, allows his reader not only to read the routes of disappointment but to hear them, for his disappointments are not only part of his life but of poetry's relationship with time.

The child dancing in the wind in *Responsibilities* (1914) has, in Yeats's gloom, only disappointment to expect. Believing in disappointment, Yeats expresses surety about a future that is unlikely to—disappoint. Yet the ear may anticipate what does not—disappointingly—happen. Being young, this child has not known

> The fool's triumph, nor yet
> Love lost as soon as won,
> Nor the best labourer dead
> And all the sheaves to bind.
> What need have you to dread
> The monstrous crying of wind? ("To a Child Dancing in the Wind," *VP* 312)

"Wind" might not be /wɪnd/ but /waɪnd/. Yet, such an archaic usage seems intrusive, awkward. The eye rhymes what the ear does not; a momentary verbal deflation is caught in the breeze for the anticipation of rhyme is met with an inexact match, a "nearly there but not quite," even as the poem is sure of what will come next to the child in the future. "Upon the brimming water among the stones" Yeats says in the titular work of *The Wild Swans at Coole* (1919), another poem of expectation, "Are nine-and-fifty swans" (*VP* 322). In sound those birds are already out-of-place, for the ear might expect a clinching masculine rhyme for "stones" not a half-rhyme that is better seen than heard. Compare, for instance, the achievement of "Think where man's glory most begins and *ends*, / And say my glory was I had such *friends*" in "The Municipal Gallery

Revisited" from *Last Poems* (1936–9) (*VP* 604). The reader, subtly, has been groomed for dissatisfaction in rhyme's play with temporality, with the disappointments not of looking ahead but of hearing ahead.

At the close of "Coole Park, 1929" from *The Winding Stair and Other Poems* (1933), there is another peculiarity conjoined with the disappointment of a non-rhyme (perhaps the modest achievement of a quarter-rhyme). The passing scholar, poet, or traveller must, in the future ruins of Lady Gregory's house, dedicate himself to recollection, to memorialization:

> —eyes bent upon the ground,
> Back turned upon the brightness of the sun
> And all the sensuality of the shade—
> A moment's memory to that laurelled head. (*VP* 489)

The answering chimes of alliteration—sensuality, shade, moment, memory—replace the absent acoustic coincidence of the last couplet in a line that, though it is the poem's climactic commemoration of Augusta Gregory and her great estate, contains another disappointment. All the glory of this "aged woman and her house" (*VP* 488)—here is a deliberately disappointing frankness of diction—reaches its culmination in an act of memory, a gesture, a celebration but only *for a moment*. The poem, rebuilding the past from an imagined future in words, moves towards the high point of its apparent task of memorialization only to surprise its reader with casual brevity at the apex of recollection. Remember, remember—but do not spend too much time about it.

Yeats announced that he had found the task of reviving ancient Irish legends a disappointment. There was more enterprise in walking naked. Starker language, plainer diction, in turn replaced the coat of many mythologies. In *The Wild Swans at Coole*, Yeats's disappointment in what that "mythological" language had achieved was arrestingly shaped in the plainest of terms, which obtained a peak in another "disappointing" line. In "In Memory of Alfred Pollexfen," the shaping was almost literal for the poem mimicked an epitaph, proposing words that might actually have been carved:

> Five-and-twenty years have gone
> Since old William Pollexfen
> Laid his strong bones down in death
> By his wife Elizabeth
> In the grey stone tomb he made. (*VP* 360)

It is a touching realization that masculine and feminine endings rhyme together at the very moment Pollexfen is lain beside his wife. But plainness becomes rougher at the close of the poem where Yeats probes how both rhyme and

repetition conjure emptiness. With the unexpected turn of the poem to the same term, Yeats's lines end suspended between the bleak articulacy of ordinary monosyllables and the dissatisfaction of bleak ordinariness. "At all these death-beds," Yeats concludes

> women heard
> A visionary white sea-bird
> Lamenting that a man should die;
> And with that cry I have raised my cry. (*VP* 361)

The poet takes the repeating "cry" of the premonitionary seabird, heard over and over again, and—repeats it. Peter McDonald, writing on the workings of rhyme in nineteenth-century poetry, sensibly says that Yeats's rhyme can create an effect of the "static" when rhyme and repetition become one.[5] McDonald associates this habit with the final phase of a century-long argument about rhyme itself. But the static, the non-progressive, is more intimately part of Yeats's conjuring of impeded futures, foiled expectations, which characterizes his own peculiar conception of how poetry works through time towards points of disappointment. Sometimes rhyme can be a peculiar form of deflation. No synonym for "cry" will do, no other word serve instead, in a concluding line that drains the finality from the masculine rhyme of "die/cry" by making it happen too soon. Yeats's language is strategically disappointing even as it addresses the inevitability of death, the event that Edward Thomas, listening to the rain, remembers, exactly the year before, "Cannot […] disappoint."[6]

Pulse raises expectations that are easy to subvert. Variation in rhythm is a poetic necessity, to be sure, but it can also provide another creative place for what might be called the verbal music of a let-down. In rhythmic patterns can suddenly be felt an absence, a missing step, or an additional beat that was not expected. In "The Lover Mourns for the Loss of Love" (*The Wind Among the Reeds*, 1899), Yeats's line dips:

> I had a beautiful friend
> And dreamed that the old despair
> Would end in love in the end… (*VP* 152)

The regularity established in "Would end in love" falters, or thins, in "in the end." The ear's momentary expectation of a pattern is upset in the subtlest sense, a kind of somnolent overcoming of musicality in tune with Yeats's soundings of disappointment elsewhere. The rhythm, at however a micro-level, is stretched just as the words themselves are over-stretched, palely repeating "end" at the—end. Yeats deftly manages, too, to inhibit the finality of the word "end" simply by repeating it so that it seems to falsify its own meaning. This

is like Matthew Arnold struggling to say goodbye at the end of "Stanzas in Memory of the Author of 'Obermann'" (1852) with that terminal line "A last, a last farewell!" where the meaning of "last" is undone as it is uttered, as if it cannot quite adhere to its own proposal.[7]

The title of "Sailing to Byzantium" (*The Tower,* 1928) offers words that, in a cognate way, play with a foiled expectation at the most refined level in a poem that, more generally, troubles the reader's sense of what is moving forward, of whether the future is knowable, of what knowledge anticipation provides. Yeats's title, the present participle, announces the dative, a movement *to*—perhaps echoing the magisterial first canto of Swinburne's *Tristram of Lyonesse* (1882), "The Sailing of the Swallow," which narrates Tristram and Yseult's fateful return to King Mark and the drinking of the love potion. Swinburne's present participle signifies poetry that represents a voyage both literally and into tragedy. Yeats's "sailing" apparently promises motion as well: the poet moves towards Byzantium. But the text itself announces he is already there. He has "sailed the seas and come / To the holy city of Byzantium" (*VP* 408). What relationship with anticipation, then, does this poem actually have? Its title disappoints the text's substance.

Yeats, incidentally, exploited the "disappointing" title elsewhere, not least in the same volume, using opening words to raise expectations that the text confounds or troubles, rendering our natural, inevitable, speculations at least at first unrevealing. I will return to another rich example at the end. But here, the most obvious instance in association with "Sailing to Byzantium" is "Meditations in Time of Civil War" (*The Tower*), which the unknowing reader might reasonably assume to be a set of overt meditations *on* the Irish Civil War, a war poem, a political analysis of Ireland in 1922 and 1923. Yeats's oblique manner, his rhetoric of evasion, his primarily tangential analysis of Ireland during the war (and his disapproval of war poetry anyway), reveals that the first-time reader has not received exactly what he or she might have expected—indeed, first-time readers may well struggle to associate much of what Yeats says with the civil war at all.

In "Easter, 1916" (*Michael Robartes and the Dancer*), we find not disappointment in a title but something more akin to the reader's experience of "The Lover Mourns for the Loss of Love," an effect of uneven musicality conjoined with another moment of "disappointing" verbal repetition. The result is not unlike that version of the let-down that Eric Griffiths discusses in his 1997 Bateson Memorial Lecture at the University of Oxford on "The Disappointment of Christina G. Rossetti."[8] Griffiths' concern there is with the emotional significance of "disappointing" repetition and Rossetti's sometimes startlingly, disappointingly, unvarnished diction. Yeats, too, exploits the disappointment of the coincidence of words and of gestures to the demotic. "We know their

dream;" he writes of the republican heroes of the Easter Rising, MacDonagh and MacBride, Connolly and Pearse:

> enough
> To know they dreamed and are dead… (*VP* 394)

That has the same disarming candor of lexis as other moments in Yeats's poetry when we face a bare truth that cannot be hidden in fancy words; moments when poetry confronts the disappointing fact of the world that it cannot disguise. Take the startling, deflating example of Yeats's disappointment in "Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen" (*The Tower*), when poetry appears to be confessing its own *inutilité*, its redundancy:

> But is there any comfort to be found?
> Man is in love and loves what vanishes,
> What more is there to say? (*VP* 429–30)

For one bleak but almost funny moment, the reader may look back when reading these words on Yeats's long career as a poet in love to reflect, wryly, that there really has been a very great deal to say. (And it is an intriguing possibility that there is an intonational equivocation here. The words can be heard, though not read, as "love's what vanishes," unsettling the line with an ambiguity that largely, disappointingly, undoes it.) Yeats secures disappointment by telling his reader that poetry can offer unburnished, raw, truths that take away at the need for poetry, for words and images, for the very texts with which the reader is engaged when reading. And that candor transports the reader back to the "disappointing" words of "Easter, 1916." Yeats asserts, with bluntness, that the heroes of the Easter Rising "dreamed and are dead," a verbal sequence that offers the sparse unpicking, the stripping down, of "dreamed" into "dead" since "dreamed" contains in letters the future extinction it hoped to avoid.

Once, in "Broken Dreams" in *The Wild Swans at Coole*, Yeats's frankness—the kind of language vaguely called "unpoetic"—is bathos. And there is unselfconscious amusement too. We read not of beautiful lofty things but of a wholly unpredicted and prosaic defect in a woman's form:

> You are more beautiful than any one,
> And yet your body had a flaw:
> Your small hands were not beautiful… (*VP* 356)

The blazon has the freshness of the "unpoetic": the first line is more like a commonplace note left in a pigeon-hole from a secret admirer, a Valentine's card. But the subsequent monosyllabic enumeration of the woman's surprising

fault—more beautiful than anyone, but with disappointingly small hands—is a let-down. And that very line, complaining about hands that are not beautiful, is hardly beautiful in itself. The lines as a whole dimly recall, perhaps, that equally surprising first encounter of Charles Bovary with Emma Rouault in Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* (1857) when Charles, attending her father, notices the attractive whiteness of Emma's nails but her defective hand overall: "Sa main pourtant n'était pas belle, point assez pâle peut-être."[9] Yeats offers his own version of this speaker at once provincial and discriminating, narrow and perfectionist, catching something of that same mixture of the exact and the limited that disappoints in finding fault with such minor disappointments. Yeats's speaker avoids the appropriately noble poetry that salutes a Helen of the present even as he sounds as if, in another way, he is writing it. And these lines about disappointment had followed, as it happens, another sequence of repetitions that create a further Yeatsian effect of read disappointment:

> Vague memories, nothing but memories,
> But in the grave all, all, shall be renewed. (*VP* 356)

Memories, memories; but, but; all, all: the lines promise renewals yet are made from the reused. Recollections of earlier words persist in this reflection on recollections as the poem struggles to move forward—even that "all, all" feels like another little rhythmic stumble, as if the line is not confident enough to do without nervous restatement, as if the term "all" oddly needs amplification but cannot be amplified except, blankly, by itself.

Yeats's repetitions leave words in a complicated relationship with linearity, with the *feeling* of the verbal advance of the poetry, because they involve recognition of language that is developing a thought even as it is not moving forward in an expected way. Here is a distinctive grammar of suspension. William Blake, writing innocently in "The Shepherd" from "Songs of Innocence" (1798), achieves something similar at a local level with those simple words: "How sweet is the Shepherdes sweet lot."[10] Without contraries is no progression—and with repetitions there is not progression but stasis, the "development" of a poetic line by a dependence on things that are the same. Repetition confuses the passage of time even as we read through time. In "Easter, 1916," Yeats captures another form of stasis at the very moment, pointedly, his words plot alteration:

> Minute by minute they change;
> A shadow of cloud on the stream
> Changes minute by minute… (*VP* 393)

Minute, minute, minute, minute: the words figure that which does not move forward on any stream as if, regardless of what Louis MacNeice would later say,

a river *can* be a river "which does not flow."[11] The business of expectation in reading a poetic line, the reader's implicit faith that there will be development, a movement ahead, a future in the words, is deftly contained by such language that moves forward through time only by not making the future new. And the most memorable cluster of words in the poem, "All changed, changed utterly" (*VP* 392), is but two sides of a tautology where sense does not advance but crosses backwards in a chiasmus to start again. That tautology, incidentally, recalls the similar effect in "Broken Dreams" where Yeats's speaker will "Leave unchanged / The hands that I have kissed, / For old sake's sake" (*VP* 357). That repeat—the sake of old sake—stalls change too in a poem that hopes, differently, for the unchanged. In "Easter, 1916," the struggle is between the transformation recorded by the words and the troubled progress of the words, the difficulty language has in moving into a future. Verbally, all that is utterly changed is the word order in this avoidance in Yeats's political commentary of what, exactly, the Easter Rising has done.[12] Both sides of the syntactic divide—the comma marks it—remain the same, a model of division entirely unlike the violent struggle in Ireland, the conflict of the assuredly separated.

Yeats trades with luminous images and with dim, imprecise gestures. "A poem is that species of composition," said Samuel Taylor Coleridge in *Biographia Literaria* (1817), "which is opposed to works of science, by proposing for its immediate object pleasure, not truth."[13] Pleasure not knowledge first; reward not information: poetry is achieved art primarily not confession or instruction or advice or facts, however important those are secondarily. As A. C. Bradley phrased a similar point on 5 June 1901 in his inaugural lecture as Oxford's Professor of Poetry, poetry's subject does not count for nothing, but it "*settles* nothing."[14] Yet sometimes Yeats steps further into Coleridge's formulation than Coleridge might have envisaged. Yeats allows his reader to feel that poetry is so far from exact knowledge that it offers only the loosest of imprecisions. Yeats's words can, through repetition, suggest the unwisdom of expecting poetic syntax simply to take a line forward; elsewhere Yeats reminds his readers that descriptive language might be peculiarly undescriptive. But what is really important about this relatively minor feature of Yeats's descriptive habits is that it provides a clue to the most distinctive way in which his poetry works out its inventive, necessary *pas de deux* with disappointment, with the reader's foiled expectation of what exactly poetry might be and do. And in "The Municipal Gallery Revisited," two lines are a surprising combination of repetition and antonym, of the same and definitely not the same:

> Wherever I had looked I had looked upon
> My permanent or impermanent images… (*VP* 602)

That second line means, simply expressed, "All my images," a kind of disappointing realization. The apparently exacting discrimination between the two forms of endurance is not narrow enough to be much discrimination at all—additional "clarification" creates redundancy, the consciousness of the unnecessary presence of words already anticipated in that "I had looked I had looked."

But, prior to these "disappointing" lines, Yeats's imprecision is achieved differently through an easily missed but not uncommon gesture that half reveals and half conceals. The gesture is particularly noticeable because it also occurs in the famous 1932 recording of Yeats's reading of "The Lake Isle of Innisfree." "I met her all but fifty years ago / For twenty minutes in some studio" (*VP* 602), Yeats says in "The Municipal Gallery Revisited." But "some" is striking—or, rather, noticeable because it is not striking. It makes a reader want to reply "but *which* studio?" Only "some" studio, not this or that one? In the BBC broadcast—in some other studio—the poet had remarked, with the same vague gesture, that he remembered "the great English poet William Morris coming in a rage out of some lecture hall."[15] The indefinite article would have served: "a lecture hall." "Some" narrows possibilities but hardly at all. It gives a misty impression that Yeats can remember more than "a lecture hall" but not exactly, or that he cannot concern himself with the precision of his own memory. Similar gestures linger, fuzzily, elsewhere: "A *sort* of battered kettle," Yeats says in "The Tower" (*VP* 409); "I sought it daily for six weeks *or so,*" he notes in "The Circus Animals' Desertion" (*VP* 629); "*Some* violent bitter man, *some* powerful man," he remembers in "Meditations in Time of Civil War" (*VP* 418); "when I awake *some* day," "The Wild Swans at Coole" concludes (*VP* 323); "Because to-day is *some* religious festival," reads "Upon a Dying Lady" (*VP* 363), a poem that also includes "the Venetian lady / Who had seemed to glide to *some* intrigue in her red shoes" (ibid.). Some, some, some: Yeats's poetry bypasses the exactness of registered experience with a conversation-like generality.

So why is this?

Yeats works imaginatively with what a reader might easily, uncritically, expect a poem to do, from the level of rhyme and syntax to the clarity of description. But there is a larger challenge, a different kind of disappointment in store for what a reader might assume from what is to come: there is a substantial question about nothing less than post-Romantic expectations for poetry readers in general. Whether it is following the growth of the poet's mind, seeing into the life of things, knowing the fate of Keats's spirit, or understanding that the world is fuller of invisible spirits than we knew, Romantic period poetry underlines—however Coleridge's defining priorities are right—epistemological claims. Poetry *is* a way of knowing even if knowing is not primarily what it is about. Yet the assumption that poetry should reveal, that the poet's knowledge or vision, should however inadequately be communicated in the

pleasurable language of poetry, is that which, provocatively, Yeats inventively disrupts in a habit that I have just echoed at the end of the last paragraph. Yeats is supremely the poet of questions. And unlike the question I posed, Yeats is interested in queries that baffle or confute: in questions that cannot be answered. The rhetorical question has a dual relationship with disappointment. In one sense, the distinctive achievement of such questions is to make a listener disappointed that there is nothing to say despite the apparent invitation to say it. The rhetorical question is a species of, so to speak, negative attainment; it has a particular kind of strength that resides in the inevitability, the predictability of the reply, which is so certain it need not be said. "Questions that do not require an answer," as G. G. Bradley's *Aids to Writing Latin Prose* (1884) phrases it, "but are only put in the form of a question in order to produce a greater effect […] are called rhetorical questions."[16] "You are interested in money," said to the blackmailer or the estate agent, is more pointedly phrased: "I take it you are interested in money?" That is Bradley's "greater effect." The listener or reader already knows the answer so there is no place for wondering. We are told what to think—or, rather, not to think. That quieting of thought, the way in which mental speculation is invited then brought to a standstill, is Yeats's most characteristic effect in his contemplation of the limits of the mind. Here is the most provocative experience of disappointment in Yeats's poetry.

Helen Vendler remarks that poets "think" in different ways to logicians. Of course that is true. More exactly, Vendler says of Yeats that he "thought" through images: he pursued "the process of thinking by substituting for a second-order philosophical argument a montage of first-order images which supplement, or in some cases replace altogether, discursive statement."[17] Images stand in or replace "logical proposition." But it seems to me that Vendler is thinking around rather than about what Yeats really does. For reading Yeats does not involve merely the *replacement* of "logical thinking" but the experience of finding "logical" thought both invited and then impeded. It is a tougher and more confrontational process than Vendler implies where disappointment is a pertinent feature of the way in which Yeats creates expectations that are not fulfilled. Readers do not have to read a poet "thinking" differently from a logician: with Yeats, struggling with the balloon of his mind as it bellies and drags in the wind, readers may distinctively feel that the mind has been called on and then—packed away.

"One had a lovely face," Yeats writes in "Memory" in *The Wild Swans at Coole*:

> And two or three had charm,
> But charm and face were in vain
> Because the mountain grass
> Cannot but keep the form
> Where the mountain hare has lain. (*VP* 350)

It is possible to conceive a number of vague paraphrases of what this conjunction of a natural image and an enumeration of lovely or charming faces might mean. Is Yeats's argumentative point here that memory, somehow, is a more enduring feature of a person than their appearance or personality? It is hardly much of an idea and feels unequal to the pleasure of the poem. Analyzing, paraphrasing like that exhausts or diminishes the text: the eloquence of the mountain hare on the grass fades if its translatable "meaning" is doggedly—so to speak—brought out. Yet Yeats has sprung a trap because what is momentarily expected, seemingly promised, *is* logical thought, the sequence of logical connection. Charm and loveliness are "in vain / *because*…," Yeats says. "I ate the biscuits *because* I was hungry;" "I was driving too fast *because* I was late:" "because," its etymology rooted in causality as "by-cause," is the pivot on which a logical explanation turns. The word is an earnest of a coming reason: why something happened, why something matters, why someone did what they did. Yet not here. Yeats invites his reader to feel let down, to realize that poetry can deploy the tools of thought, the tempting promise of "because," only to confute it by declining to provide what was apparently assured. Thinking is apparently asked for only so the reader can realize that reason is not the way to apprehend the charm of Yeats's image and whatever thing it is the emblem of.

Questions have related though not identical effects. Sometimes, Yeats poses inquiries—he is among the most questioning, in a literal sense, of all poets in English—which are plainly unanswerable and the reader must face a kind of blankness, a mental void, in considering what cannot be solved by thought. "Do you not hear me calling, white deer with no horns?" the poet asks at the beginning of "He mourns for the Change that has come upon him and his Beloved, and longs for the End of the World" (*VP* 153). Readers cannot know what to "say" in response to that because they have overheard an inquiry neither directed at them nor admitting of any knowledgeable answer. What *does* the white deer with no horns know? Gently pushing the reader to sense the borders of comprehension and the limits of where thinking begins and ends, Yeats makes of the question a grammatical form that invites thought in ways that thought cannot deal. Who, exactly, "dreamed that beauty passes like a dream?" ("The Rose of the World" *VP* 111); where *is* the painter's brush "that could show anything / Of all that pride and humility?" in "The Municipal Gallery Revisited" (*VP* 602); among what rushes *will* those swans build after Yeats has found them flown away? Here is knowledge beyond reach even though the poet sounds as if someone knows it.

Questions encourage a reader to apprehend the presence of what is not and cannot be comprehended, the occult answers beyond grasp, off the edge of the mind, off the edge of the world. Elsewhere, Yeats more complicatedly proffers inquiries that might or might not be rhetorical questions that more deeply

discomfort the reader because we cannot decide if there is an answer at all. "O beast of the wilderness, bird of the air, / Must I endure your amorous cries?" he writes in the 1910 revision of "He thinks of his past greatness when a part of the constellations of heaven" (*VP* 177).[18] The original lines had not posed a question. But Yeats, in keeping with his impulses elsewhere, wanted one. Yet what may the reader reply? Here might be a rhetorical question with the implied answer, "Yes." But across the reader's mind could also flicker the thought that there could be a future in which the poet need not endure those cries. Is there optimism or fatalism? How can we know? Quietly, working in the territories of the uncertain, the poem poses a choice between already knowing the answer and never knowing it. The reader, in turn, is sent back to ruminate on whether thinking—despite the question's apparent invitation to think—is the best way of reading after all.

"Was there another Troy for her to burn?" (*VP* 257), Yeats asks at the close of the sonnet on Maud Gonne included in *The Green Helmet and Other Poems* (1910). That was a poem composed entirely of questions. But the reader need not be troubled to think whether there is another Troy for Gonne to engulf in flames since the title has already told us: there is "No Second Troy." The title—like that of "Sailing to Byzantium" and "Meditations in Time of Civil War"—disappoints. It troubles the conclusion by taking away the chance of considering it. Thinking, once more, is encouraged then rebuffed.

Elsewhere there are not problems of titles but other insinuating questions that press on readers the difficulties of thinking too much, of failing to be able to move the discursive matter of the poem forward despite the seeming invitation so to do. Rumination cannot help solve the riddles of "Leda and the Swan," which is certainly, in what is perhaps the most worked-through of Yeats's short poems that invite then trouble thought. The sestet is as follows:

> A shudder in the loins engenders there
> The broken wall, the burning roof and tower
> And Agamemnon dead.
> Being so caught up,
> So mastered by the brute blood of the air,
> Did she put on his knowledge with his power
> Before the indifferent beak could let her drop? (*VP* 441)

Discussing the early manuscript versions of "Leda and the Swan," Bernard McKenna says that "The final form of the poem, read in the context of the drafts, reaffirms the tragic consequences of Leda's rape but also affirms her potential for self-awareness."[19] There is truth in this. But that "potential" is surely misleading. *Did* Leda put on his knowledge with his power? Did she foresee the future catastrophe of Troy that would spring from Zeus's rape of her? I suppose

it could loosely be said that there is "potential" for both answers, for yes and no. But the two answers jostle with each other and cancel each other out, so that the reader is left not with a sense of potential but of stalemate. The poem blocks one possibility with another. Yeats brings his reader to the edge. He asks a question of a myth that only a prophet, a miraculous mind, could answer. The disappointment of Yeats's question hints, momentarily, at imprecise and mysterious ways of knowing, of magical powers that can grasp truths beyond the range of human cognition. Poetry does not tell us *what* we cannot know but allows us to feel *that* we cannot know it.

In Judeo-Christian history, the first question is that of the serpent in the Garden of Eden who asks of Eve: "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" (Genesis 3:1, *KJV*). Aptly, the first question in Biblical history commences the disastrous path to the acquisition of greater knowledge that is the curse of humankind. A question is a way of searching for enlightenment—ingeniously or disingenuously. And for Genesis, with all its anxiety about knowing, the question, first of all, is about gaining unlawful, improper, comprehension. Yeats's rhetorical questions (or questions that might be rhetorical) probe the shadows not of unlawful knowledge but of that which remains temptingly beyond the ordinarily human. We are amid the domains of understanding that merely thinking minds cannot reach. Yeats's disappointments concern looking, hearing, and feeling ahead as much as they involve, too, the foiled expectation of what knowledge poetry might give. This writing peculiarly exposes the permanent truth that reading poetry itself is a form of guessing, of anticipation—however fuzzy or unselfconscious—involving what the reader *thinks* is going to happen. There is imaginative, aural, and intellectual speculation in reading Yeats's most characteristic verse that is, peculiarly, uniquely, dependent on the unfulfillment of what a reader easily takes to be a promise. Reading Yeats I sense exactly how, in the act of reading poetry, I cannot know of what is to come.

Notes

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1. From W. B. Yeats' "Introduction" to Lady Gregory, *Gods and Fighting Men: The Story of the Tuatha de Danaan and of the Fianna of Ireland* (London: Murray, 1904), xxiii.
2. William Wordsworth, *The Excursion: A Poem* (London: Moxon, 1853), 142.
3. See *OED*, "disappoint," v., 1: "To undo the appointment of; to deprive of an appointment, office, or possession; to dispossess, deprive." The first usage is given as 1489.

4. Samuel Beckett, *Nohow On: Company Ill Seen Ill Said, Worstward Ho*, ed. S. E. Gontarski (New York: Grove, 1996), 89.
5. Peter McDonald, *Sound Intentions: The Workings of Rhyme in Nineteenth-Century Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 15.
6. Edward Thomas, "Rain" in *Collected Poems* (London: Faber, 1936), 66. The poem was written on 7 January 1916.
7. "A" [Matthew Arnold], *Empedocles on Etna, and Other Poems* (London: Fellowes, 1852), 184–95 (195). For the significance of this Arnoldian repetition, see Francis O'Gorman, "Matthew Arnold and Rereading," *The Cambridge Quarterly*, 41 (2012), 245–61. There is a valuable recent account of Yeats' prosody in relation to the passage of time—which concentrates on revision and recollection—in David Ben-Merre, "The Brawling of a Sparrow in the Eaves: Vision and Revision in W. B. Yeats," *Journal of Modern Literature*, 31 (2008), 71–85.
8. See Eric Griffiths, "The Disappointment of Christina G. Rossetti," *Essays in Criticism,* 47 (1997), 107–42.
9. Gustave Flaubert, *Madame Bovary: Moeurs de province* (Paris: Michel Lévy Frères, 1857), 23 ("her hand was not beautiful, perhaps not pale enough").
10. See the MS version, *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, copy B, 1789, 1794 (British Museum, London) http://www.blakearchive.org/exist/blake/archive/object.xq?objectid=songsie.b.illbk.11&java=no (last accessed 19 January 2017). There is a recent conceptually sophisticated account of Blake and the idea of progression in Russell Prather, "William Blake and the Problem of Progression," *Studies in Romanticism*, 46 (2007), 507–40.
11. "[…] no river is a river which does not flow," Louis MacNeice, "Autumn Journal" (1939) in *Collected Poems* (London: Faber, 1966), 102.
12. The calibrations of political meaning in this poem in relation to dates of publication are shrewdly analyzed by Matthew Campbell in "Dating 'Easter, 1916,'" *International Yeats Studies* 1.1 (2016), Article 7, available at: http://tigerprints.clemson.edu/iys/vol1/iss1/7, last accessed 19 January 2017.
13. S. T. Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, *Or, Biographical Sketches of My Literary Life and Opinions* ([1817] London: Dent, 1906), 164.
14. A. C. Bradley, *Poetry for Poetry's Sake: An Inaugural Lecture* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1901), 15. The intellectual context of this lecture is adroitly discussed by Nicholas Shrimpton in "Bradley and the Aesthetes," *Essays in Criticism*, 55 (2005), 309–31.
15. For the recording, see http://www.openculture.com/2012/06/rare_1930s_audio_wb_yeats_reads_four_of_his_poems.html (last accessed 19 January 2017).
16. G. G. Bradley, *Aids to Writing Latin Prose with Exercises* ([1884] London: Longmans, Green, 1902), 144. Note the citation for *OED*, "rhetorical," 4.
17. Helen Vendler, *Poets Thinking: Pope, Whitman, Dickinson, Yeats* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 8.
18. The unrevised lines, not comprising a rhetorical question, read "Although the rushes and the fowl of the air / Cry of his love with their pitiful cries" *VP*, 277.
19. Bernard McKenna, "Violence, Transcendence, and Resistance in the Manuscripts of Yeats's "Leda and the Swan,'" *Philological Quarterly*, 90 (2011), 425–44 (425).

Yeats and the Modern School[1]

Wit Pietrzak

Despite his assertive opinions about what constituted true poetry, W. B. Yeats's judgments of other people's verse, especially the poetry of his older and younger contemporaries, were frequently adversarial. By contrast, he remained quite open to avant-garde work in the theater and to some degree in prose. In 1934, he showed little prejudice against Rupert Doone's experimental "Group Theatre," calling it "highly skilled" (*YGYL* 373) and deciding to cooperate with Doone to have his Noh plays staged. He sympathized with Joyce's early prose and saw potential in the work (mainly essayistic and broadly philosophical) of Wyndham Lewis. However, he generally dismissed new poetry: Pound and Eliot as well as the later generation's prodigies, Auden, MacNeice, Spender and Day Lewis. This prejudice against the younger poets may to some extent be ascribed to the fact that Yeats's reading of the poetry contemporaneous with his own was sparse when compared to his exposure to drama, which, as one of the directors of the Abbey, he read regularly; when it came to fiction, he boasted a vast knowledge of what may be considered pulp literature, which became his pastime during periods of convalescence after bouts of illnesses that befell him at disturbingly regular intervals from late 1927. In addition to westerns and detective fiction and the work of Joyce and Lewis, he developed a fondness for the novelists D. H. Lawrence and James Stephens.

Although Yeats kept up to date with the developments of those poets who were either his friends, such as AE and Oliver St. John Gogarty, or their associates, he did not become conversant with the principal movements of twentieth-century English-language poetry until, when in October 1934, he was asked to edit *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse*. Before that, his last in-depth reading of contemporary poetry came in the early years of the new century. In 1899, he edited and wrote a preface for *A Book of Irish Verse Selected from Modern Writers* that opened with Thomas Davis and included the new generation of Irish poets including Nora Hopper, Kathryn Tynan Hinkson, Herbert Trench, AE, Douglas Hyde, and Lionel Johnson. Being a member of the Rhymers' Club, Johnson constituted a link between the Irish and English traditions. Indeed, those few years spent in the company of Johnson and Symons marked the only time in Yeats's poetic career that he stayed in the main current of poetic development; in the years to follow he would poetically outgrow the Rhymers but would never come to be so intimately connected to the live contemporary tradition. Although Yeats spent 1911 until late 1916 in close

collaboration with Pound, he did not share his circle of friends. For example, working on his selections for *The Oxford Book* in 1935, he decided to reject Richard Aldington and found H.D., whom he had once appreciated, "empty, mere style." Similarly, F. S. Flint's work was pronounced "gilded stucco" (*CL InteLex* 6415). Shortly after Yeats's death, T. S. Eliot proclaimed him not only a "master" but also "a contemporary,"[2] however, the fact that Eliot needed to state that appraisal indicates that Yeats's position within the main current of contemporary poetry was uncertain. That is all to say, when Yeats was asked to prepare an anthology of modern poetry, he needed to compensate for decades of readerly negligence.[3]

What *The Oxford Book* came to represent in the end has been subjected to extensive critical scrutiny, but in the main, scholars agree with MacNeice: "It seems that Yeats Oxford Book is loony."[4] Yeats's introduction to *The Oxford Book* caused no less rancor than the selection itself; his attack on Eliot, Pound and "the Auden school" coupled with dismissal of the war poets and an outlandishly optimistic approval of Dorothy Wellesley and W. J. Turner may not have seemed as inane to contemporary readers as they do now, but the lines along which Yeats led his onslaught have shown him to be out of tune with the developments in poetry of the previous two decades. For Yeats, however, 1935 was the year when he effectively realized where his own theory of poetry stood *vis à vis* the contemporary scene. The crucial differences between his idea of poetry and that of the moderns have been discussed by Frank Kermode and C. K. Stead, Terence Diggory, Ronald Bush, Steven Matthews and Edna Longley.[5] However, the aspect of Yeats's involvement with modern poets that has received less critical attention is his own theory of post-World War I poetry. In what follows, I explore Yeats's construction of the notion of modern verse in his late writings, with particular attention to Eliot, Pound, and the writers that Yeats grouped together under the name of "the Auden school." I aim to demonstrate that his principal criticism of contemporary verse derives from the ideas developed in his newly-discovered philosophy of history set forth in *A Vision* (both A and B texts); it is here argued that the crucial line of dissention comes down to the opposition between what Yeats called Unity of Being and Unity of Fact. Being one of three primary ideals along with Unity with Nature (characteristic of Phases 26–28) and Unity with God (characteristic of Phases 2–4), Unity of Fact is in no sense a cornerstone of *A Vision*'s philosophy. Yet, it captures both the essential features of the moderns' work and is an appropriately marginal term for what Yeats regarded as a transient moment in the history of poetry.

When he began reading for *The Oxford Book*, Yeats had already been busy correcting *A Vision*, which not only gave him "metaphors for poetry" (*AVB* 8) but also offered a template for assessing the lyrical moment that the world had arrived at since the beginning, in the 11th century, of the present

one-thousand-year cycle. The ideas that came from the automatic sessions with his wife were first gathered in the 1926 edition of *A Vision* but never really relinquished their grip on Yeats's imagination. It is unsurprising, then, that by October 1935 he was able to tell Robert Nichols that he "[had] arranged the poems [in the anthology] as a kind of drama of the soul" (*CL InteLex* 6381). The notion goes back to section IV of "What the Caliph Partly Learned" in *A Vision* A, where Yeats compares the antithetical man to a character in *Commedia dell'Arte* so as to emphasise the creative aspect of the Will's struggle against its Body of Fate (see *CW13* 18–19). Earlier still, in the script for 17 January 1918, the control Thomas added that this comparison could extend to the Noh which is also "partially a dramatization of the soul – it is all great art" (*YVP1* 270). Therefore *The Oxford Book*, as Yeats told Margot Collis, was to be "the standard Anthology" (*CL InteLex* 6316) in the sense that it would demonstrate the central conflict between the primary and antithetical dispensations of the historical cycle as manifested in the development of modern English and Anglo-Irish poetry in general and of individual poets in particular.

In the script and *A Vision* A, Yeats sketched the broad concept of the struggle between the new generation of the "moderns" and "the more sensuous work of the 'romantics'" (*LDW* 74), a line-up that included Yeats himself, Irish poets, especially Gogarty, as well as his new-found friends Dorothy Wellesley and W. J. Turner. In a session of 2 June 1918, following an intensive mapping of individual Phases on world history, Yeats received confirmation that Western civilization had reached Phase 22 of the historical cycle (*YVP1* 471). In *A Vision* A, he explains further that Phase 22 is characterized by impersonality: "the aim must be to use the *Body of Fate* to deliver the *Creative Mind* from the *Mask*, and not to use the *Creative Mind* to deliver the *Mask* from the *Body of Fate*. The being does this by so using the intellect upon the facts of the world that the last vestige of personality disappears" (*CW13* 75). This is an inversion of the logic that governed Phases 12 to 18, in which the Mask was to be liberated from the constrained path dictated by the Body of Fate so that the Will might win some autonomy in the act of assuming a Mask. From Phase 19 the Body of Fate begins to dominate and so the Mask becomes the undesired aspect of personal freedom, for now "all must be impersonal" (*CW13* 77). Moreover, "since Phase 19 [power] has been wielded by a fragment only" rather than by "the whole nature" (*CW13* 76). The emphasis on fragment rather than wholeness marks the movement away from Unity of Being to which the being comes closest in Phase 17. After 17, however, the near-complete unity of thought and action is becoming ever more distant. This is further accompanied by the loss of the mind's emotional character, which is replaced by "a predominately intellectual character" (*CW13* 76). As a result, "A man of Phase 22 will commonly not only systematise, to the exhaustion of his will, but discover this exhaustion of will in

all that he studies" (*CW13* 76). Therefore the man of Phase 22, caring little for personality as Mask, content to bow before fate which he accepts intellectually as part of the larger system of the universe, seeks Unity of Fact that he wishes to know only through "a single faculty" (*CW13* 78), for now the faculties grow ever more separate. In terms of art and poetry, "Symbols may become hateful to us, the ugly and the arbitrary delightful that we may the more quickly kill all memory of Unity of Being" (*CW13* 79). These qualities summarize Yeats's perception of the Western world in the mid-1920s, which to him had lost the crucial inner desire to unite all human pursuits into a single pattern of a ritualistic performance of life.

Commenting in "Dove or Swan" on the world as it seemed to him in 1925, Yeats comes to "discover already the first phase—Phase 23—of the last quarter in certain friends of mine, and in writers, poets and sculptors admired by these friends" (*CW13* 174). Yeats classifies J. M. Synge's and Rembrandt's individual Phases as belonging to Phase 23, hence their ability to observe and incorporate reality into their work: "Artists and writers of Phase 21 and Phase 22 have eliminated all that is personal from their style, seeking cold metal and pure water, but he [the man of Phase 23] will delight in colour and idiosyncrasy, though these he must find rather than create. Synge must find rhythm and syntax in the Aran Islands, Rembrandt delight in all accidents of the visible world" (*CW13* 81). The replacement of creation with emulation and the gift for meticulous rendition of the surrounding world together with its idiosyncrasies broadly define Yeats's perception of contemporary writing that boasts the qualities characterized by Phase 22: impersonality, fragmentation of symbol, intellect rather than emotion and Darwinian systematization. But the modern avant-garde (though Yeats never uses that term—he means the entire group, not individual poets), including Pound, Eliot, Joyce and Lewis among English-speaking writers, already looks to the detailing of reality that characterizes Phase 23. They (together with Pirandello) "either eliminate from metaphor the poet's phantasy and substitute a strangeness discovered by historical or contemporary research or who break up the logical processes of thought by flooding them with associated ideas or words that seem to drift into the mind by chance" (*CW13* 175). Whereas Yeats sought intensity of unified experience, he regarded the moderns as seeking the most precise embodiment of the world as it is.

Yeats seems to regard Unity of Fact as representing a materialist perception of reality that he foresaw would soon become the dominant ideology. His brief discussion in *A Vision* A of the quality of the moderns' works and the prediction that shortly the world would come under the domination of antithetical ideals that intellectual elites, for now called "covens," would espouse is excluded from *A Vision* B. Although the date of his writing of this section (February 1925) remains unchanged in *A Vision* B, the ending of the 1936 edition

is the product of Yeats's extensive revisions of the treatise that he completed just before embarking on preparations for *The Oxford Book*. In the later version, in lieu of discussing the moderns, he returns to a symbolic evocation of the system, "testing my convictions and those of others by its unity, attempting to substitute particulars for an abstraction like that of algebra" (*AVB* 301). He concludes that his "desert geometry" must stand against the prevalent ideologies of the day, the "socialistic and communistic prophecies" (*AVB* 301). This reference to socialism and communism falls back on the idea, silenced in *A Vision* A but given some prominence in the Card File, that "Socialism may last on through part of 23. At 24 organization 'by production' comes & at 24 all are brought into subordination to the skillful, the tecnically skillful & here again there may be violence" (*YVP3* 84). The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, imagined as the "Mere anarchy […] loosed upon the world" (*CW1* 187), was a disturbing harbinger of incipient collapse of the West, but in 1925 socialism, let alone communism, posed less of an immediate threat to Yeats than another outbreak of civil war in Ireland.

By 1935, when the final revisions to *A Vision* B were completed, the idea of socialism holding sway over the world had come to unnerve Yeats, who for a moment (the high point coming in 1933) had hoped that the Blueshirts under General O'Duffy in Ireland and fascists in Europe would ensure that the elite covens thrived. However, by 1936 he realized fascism was no better than the communism that he had despised all along. In 1932, he had told Maud Gonne, an anti-Semite and supporter of Hitler and Mussolini as adversaries of England, "I dislike both parties [fascists and communists] as I like liberty but we shall all have to join one or the other or take to a begging bowl" (*G-YL* 448). In one of his notebooks from the 1930s, he further observed that "Communism, fascism are inadequate because society is the struggle of two forces not transparent to reason, the family and the individual."[6] The idea of the struggle between the family and the individual, rather than fascist or even Nazi, as some would argue,[7] underpins Yeats's interest in eugenics that started in 1936.[8] It needs to be noted that this formula is in a large measure a re-deployment of the fundamental point that Yeats explored in *A Vision* and before that in "If I were Four-and-Twenty" as well as in numerous poems and plays; the family stands for one's fate and the individual for the unexpected idiosyncratic variation possible only for the artist. In this sense, for Yeats, socialism and communism, with their shared emphasis on the proletarian mass in conflict with the bourgeoisie and with fascism, with what in a letter to Desmond FitzGerald Yeats called its "dynamic element […] the clear picture to be worked for" (*CL InteLex* 5853), are only transitory moments on a path to something else that is "lying deeper than intellect" and "is not affected by the flux of history" (*CL InteLex* 5853). The ending of *A Vision* B responds to these critiques of socialism and communism,

and implicitly fascism as well. What these ideologies offer is merely a way of compelling the nation to increase its material power; they ask people to subscribe to Unity of Fact and not Unity of Being, which results in a depreciation of man's abilities, for "any hale man can dig or march" (*CW5* 230), as Yeats mockingly put it in *On the Boiler*.

When Yeats's delineation of the nature of the present world, as offered in both editions of *A Vision* and his other writings, is coupled with his remarks on Pound, Eliot, Joyce and Lewis, it transpires that the moderns constituted for Yeats a completion of his Instructors' prophecies that the age would veer towards fact, intellect and fragmentation, whether of a socialist or fascist kind. In his introduction to *The Oxford Book*, Yeats identifies a pattern of rebellion against the Victorian rule of rhetoric, logic and scientism that dates back to Walter Pater, who "offered instead of moral earnestness life lived as 'a hard gem-like flame'" (*CW5* 183). Pater's example was then followed by the members of the Rhymers Club: Arthur Symons, Lionel Johnson, Ernest Dowson (and a number of others), all of whom feature prominently in Yeats's anthology. Despite their deficiencies, the Rhymers are given credit for having succeeded in purging logic, rhetoric and scientism from poetry and drama, which by the mid-1930s were to embody beauty in the language purified of weary imagery of longing for spiritual perfection.

The poets who came between the Rhymers and the "modern writer," such as Laurence Binyon and Sturge Moore, continued, after Robert Bridges, to strive for "words often commonplace made unforgettable by some trick of speeding and slowing" (*CW5* 188). In the October broadcast, Yeats concludes that he and they "wrote as men had always written" but "then established things were shaken by the Great War" (*CW5* 94–95). In its aftermath, the beliefs in progress and development had been undermined, and "influential young men began to wonder if anything could last or if anything were worth fighting for. In the third year of the War came the most revolutionary man in poetry during my lifetime, though his revolution was stylistic alone—T. S. Eliot published his first book" (*CW5* 95). Yeats indirectly links World War I, general disillusionment with the world, and the arrival of Eliot on the poetic scene. This connection is revealing in that the war was for Yeats an outgrowth of the mechanical age that cared little for poetry.[9] The fact that the general fall of values which resulted from the War is mentioned in the same breath as the arrival of Eliot seems to indicate that the revolutionary poet was the product of the horrific times. This is corroborated in his introduction to *The Oxford Book*, in which Yeats argues that "Eliot has produced a great effect upon his generation because he has described men and women that get out of bed or into it from mere habit; in describing this life that has lost heart his own art seems grey, cold, dry" (*CW5* 190–191). He goes on to compare Eliot to Alexander Pope, "working without

apparent imagination, producing his effects by a rejection of all rhythms and metaphors used by the more popular romantics rather than by the discovery of his own, this rejection giving his work an unexaggerated plainness that has the effect of novelty" (*CW5* 191). Eliot is thus shown as a psychological realist, always on the lookout for the adequate description of the necessarily modern state of mind. Although he does not acknowledge it, Yeats recognizes in Eliot's poetry the working of the objective correlative that Eliot would go on to describe in "Hamlet and His Problems" that was included in *The Sacred Wood*, a collection of essays for which Yeats had "a reasonable liking" (*YGYL* 97). For Eliot, emotions must be expressed in art through "a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked."[10] Shakespeare's failure to justify Hamlet's bafflement marks his failure to tackle what Eliot calls "intractable material" that proved too difficult, and Eliot identifies *Coriolanus* and *Antony and Cleopatra* as "Shakespeare's most assured artistic success."[11] Yeats would have agreed to a point with Eliot's judgement, for he also thought highly of *Antony and Cleopatra* and produced *Coriolanus* at the Abbey Theatre, but his reasons for appreciating Shakespeare are markedly different from Eliot's.

In his early essay "At Stratford-on-Avon," Yeats reports the "Week of Kings": history plays to be performed at the Stratford festival in April 1901. He argues that "To pose character against character was an element of Shakespeare's art" and so the two typical figures in all of Shakespeare's oeuvre are represented by Henry V and Richard II. Whereas the former "has the gross vices, the coarse nerves, of one who is to rule among violent people" and he is "remorseless and undistinguished as some natural force," the latter is possessed of "that lyricism which rose out of [his] mind like the jet of a fountain to fall again where it had risen" (*CW4* 81). For Yeats, Richard II is Shakespeare's real hero and greatest creation not because his emotions are adequately and objectively represented but for the precisely opposite reason: he symbolizes the incomprehensible force of poetic utterance, his mind being one of those fountains that Yeats admired in Blake and Shelley.[12] Almost a decade later, he defined tragic art, the art that in "At Stratford-on-Avon" he saw performed, as being "passionate art, the drowner of dykes, the confounder of understanding" and added that it "moves us by setting us to reverie, by alluring us almost to the intensity of utterance" (*CW4* 178). Thus while Eliot stresses dispassionate presentation that is susceptible of being explained, Yeats desires intensity of emotion that eludes comprehension but makes "our minds expand convulsively or spread like some moon-brightened image-crowded sea" (*CW4* 178–179).

Looking at Eliot's poetry, Yeats sees the objective ideal that led the younger poet to appreciate *Coriolanus* not for the passion of his revenge but for the

adequate expression of the cause of his hankering after vengeance. Eliot's poems that Yeats chose for *The Oxford Book* included "Preludes," whose third part Yeats alludes to in his introduction:

> You tossed a blanket from the bed,
> You lay upon your back, and waited;
> You dozed, and watched the night revealing
> The thousand sordid images
> Of which your soul was constituted[…] (*OBMV* 279)

Yeats would have read the poem as a flat representation of man's confusion and inner desolation that leads to "The morning" that "comes to consciousness / Of faint stale smells of beer / From the saw-dust trampled street" (*OBMV* 279). Eliot's evocation of man in "Preludes" but also in "The Hollow Men" (in which, however, there is for Yeats "rhythmical animation" [*CW5* 191]) emphasizes the pointlessness and dreariness of earthly existence, days that only "Bring us farther from God and nearer to the Dust" (*OBMV* 290). This image of downtrodden man who is nothing without God stands at odds with Yeats's idea, expressed in his introduction to the never-realized Edition de Luxe of his work, that the poet "is never the bundle of accident and incoherence that sits down to breakfast," for in his work "he has been re-born as an idea, something intended, complete" (*CW5* 204). Writing of "men and women that get out of bed or into it from mere habit," Yeats pictures just such "a bundle of accident and incoherence," breakfast being "an interruption of the poet's proper business of engaging with his own dream world, and the phatic chit-chat of the morning repast constitut[ing] a rather jarring contrast to the inner theatre of the night."[13]

Eliot's vices that Yeats exposes have nothing to do with impersonal theory of poetic creation, a point of dissension between Eliot's modernism and Yeats's romantic symbolism that is frequently cited. Richard Greaves, paying particular attention to Yeats's poetical and critical work of the 1907–1914 period, argues pithily that "Whereas Eliot sees the poet's mind as something to be held open, in order that his personality should remain out of his work, and that the 'significant emotion' available through the tradition should form itself there for him to transmit, Yeats speaks of creating a secondary personality through his work."[14] While the point is partly tenable for the early twentieth-century Yeats, it is problematic for the later Yeats, who told Olivia Shakespear: "I think I have finished with self-expression and if I write more verse it will be impersonal, perhaps even a going back to my early self" (*L* 816). Despite the fact that this is in a way a declaration of artistic death (Yeats suffered from writer's block after Lady Gregory's death), impersonal poetry is not devalued but associated with

early verse. Indeed, John Kelly has recently shown that Eliot and Yeats had a lot in common, including a desire for authentication of the spiritual world, opposition to the rationalization of theology and, importantly enough, criticism of the idea of originality.[15] Moreover, Edna Longley has demonstrated that particularly in *The Cutting of an Agate* (comprising articles that were probably familiar to Eliot), Yeats delineates the notions of tradition and personality that may have stood behind some of Eliot's own pronouncements.[16] This is further corroborated by Eliot, who observed in a letter to Gilbert Seldes that Yeats was perhaps the only one to share his and Pound's preoccupation with "the value and the significance of the method of moulding a contemporary narrative upon an ancient myth."[17] Longley sees the difference between Yeats and Eliot in the fact that while the former "made almost an infallible Church of poetic tradition" (*CW3* 115), the latter deplored such an idea, remaining loath to vest poetry with the same power as religion.[18] However, what is ignored in these accounts of Yeats's perception of Eliot is the fact that for Yeats, Eliot embodies a primary moment in the thousand-year cycle of the world; his realism, devotion to objectivity and intellectual apprehension of literature make Eliot a model poet of Unity of Fact rather than of Unity of Being. What his work lacks is the "phantasmagoria" that separates the poet from the incoherent man (*CW5* 204).

Yeats did not deplore all of Eliot's work. In the introduction to *The Oxford Book* and in a letter to George Yeats, he praises *Murder in the Cathedral*, mentioning the passionate moment of Thomas's speech. But another passage must have struck Yeats. When the priests try to lock the cathedral so as not to let in the knights intent on murdering the Archbishop, Thomas commands them to "Unbar the door!" and scolds them for "defer[ing] to the fact."[19] Thomas dismisses fact and hopes to stand "in God's holy fire," to use Yeats's phrasing (*VP* 407). Moreover, after the four tempters have tried to lead Thomas astray, he finally resolves that he must go the path of self-sacrifice but recognizes that "The last temptation is the greatest treason: / To do the right deed for the wrong reason."[20] This would have sounded familiar to Yeats, in whose *Countess Cathleen* the angel explains that Cathleen's sin of selling her soul is forgiven, for "The Light of Lights / Looks always on the motive, not the deed" (*VPl* 167). For Yeats, Eliot was capable of reaching beyond his declared ideas, like he did in *Murder in the Cathedral* but also in *The Waste Land*, which Yeats initially found "very beautiful, but here & there are passages I do not understand—four or five lines" (*CL InteLex* 4264).[21] In the 1924 preface to *The Cat and the Moon*, Yeats goes so far as to draw a parallel between Eliot's poem and the work of Lady Gregory and Synge (*VPl* 1308). However, by 1935 *The Waste Land*, though "moving in symbol and imagery," had been dismissed for its "monotony of accent" (*CW5* 191). In the introduction and the broadcast, and with the doctrine of history clearly laid out in recently-revised *A Vision*, Eliot is moulded into a figure of a

modern poet not so much for being impersonal (though it is obviously noted by Yeats) as for his obsession with realism, what might be termed Unity of Fact: "Eliot's genius is human, mundane, impeccable," all of which contrast with W. J. Turner, who Yeats ensigns for his romantic school and pitches as direct opposite to Eliot because he gained "a power of emotional construction" (*CW5* 195). Where Eliot describes, possibly mocks and so effectively ceases to write poetry, Turner organizes his material and unravels patterns.

Turner provides a counterbalance to the chaotic modern poetry, particularly Pound's: "Ezra Pound has made flux his theme; plot, characterization, logical discourse, seem to him abstractions unsuitable to a man of his generation." These remarks are based on Pound's "immense poem in *vers libre* called for the moment *The Cantos*" (*CW5* 192). Belonging to Phase 12, Pound's poetry responds to the increasing fragmentation of the world that starts at Phase 19 of the historical cycle. Furthermore, Yeats's emphasis on the fact that the flux of *The Cantos* is, following Pound's view, only suitable "to a man of his generation" suggests that the chaos that Pound thematizes is in fact the contemporary discontinuity of Phases 22–23. A similar charge is pressed against Basil Bunting in Yeats's 1930 Diary: "A poet whose free verse I have greatly admired [Bunting] rejects God and every kind of unity, calls the ultimate reality anarchy, means by that word something which for lack of metaphysical knowledge he cannot define" (*Ex* 295). Although Yeats's appraisal of Pound's poetry ranged from criticism to appreciation, Pound's early verse received more acclaim.[22] In *A Packet for Ezra Pound*, Yeats finds the ideas of cyclicality elaborated in *A Vision* in Pound's "The Return" and the poem duly finds its way into *The Oxford Book*. Also, it seems to be the poem that Yeats has in mind when he argues that in Pound "I find more style than form; at moments more style, more deliberate nobility and the means to convey it than in any contemporary poet" (*CW5* 193). In a speech given at *Poetry*'s banquet during his 1914 visit to the US, Yeats called "The Return" "the most beautiful poem that has been written in the free form, one of the few in which I find real organic rhythm" (*UP2* 414). This praise would be true of parts of *The Cantos* too, but, remembering the descriptions of the nature of the contemporary Phase of the world's cycle, in the Introduction Yeats goes beyond his tentative remarks included in *A Packet for Ezra Pound* (*AVB* 4–5):

> There is no transmission through time, we pass without comment from ancient Greece to modern England, from modern England to medieval China; the symphony, the pattern, is timeless, flux eternal and therefore without movement. Like other readers I discover at present merely exquisite or grotesque fragments. He hopes to give the impression that all is living, that there are no edges, no convexities, nothing to check the flow. (*CW5* 193)

While in 1929, Yeats reservedly suggested that he "cannot find any adequate definition" for the pattern of *The Cantos* (*AVB* 5), in the introduction, he comes to regard the epic as an experiment that essentially failed to "wring lilies from the acorn," as Pound put it in *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley*.[23] In his estimation of *The Cantos*, Yeats uses Pound's own idea from Canto VII: "Life to make mock of motion: / For the husks, before me, move, / The words rattle: shells given out by shells."[24] Yeats concludes that "since the appearance of the first Canto I have tried to suspend judgement" (*CW5* 193) and so echoes Eliot, who claimed that "We will leave it ["Three Cantos"] as a test: when anyone has studied Mr. Pound's poems in chronological order […] he is prepared for the Cantos—but not till then."[25]

Yeats told Pound that he "should like to use Canto XVII" (*CL InteLex* 6440), the only Canto to have made it to *The Oxford Book*, excusing such a limited selection with Pound's high financial expectations. Still, Canto XVII adeptly illustrates Yeats's criticism of Pound's project, for its description of what Pound in a letter to his father called "a sort of paradiso terrestre"[26] turns out to be an evocation of stillness rather than a lively landscape that is suggested by the opening line, "So that the vines burst from my fingers" (*OBMV* 243). It continues,

> Flat water before me,
> and the trees growing in water,
> Marble trunks out of stillness,
> On past the palazzi,
> in the stillness,
> The light now, not of the sun. (*OBMV* 244)

This stasis cannot be the paradise, as Albright, silently following Yeats, noted: "there is an undertone of the artificiality, of surrogation: marble columns have replaced tree-trunks."[27] Therefore it is the fragmentation of the imagist technique ("arbitrary symbols" for Yeats) and over-intellectualization at the expense of emotion that for Yeats prove to be the determining features of Pound's verse.

The tension in Canto XVII between lively metamorphosis and deadened permanence[28] is approached by Yeats in "Byzantium":

> At midnight on the Emperor's pavement flit
> Flames that no faggot feeds, nor steel has lit,
> Nor storm disturbs, flames begotten of flame,
> Where blood-begotten spirits come
> And all complexities of fury leave,
> Dying into a dance,
> An agony of trance,
> An agony of flame that cannot singe a sleeve. *(VP* 498)

This is an evocation of a land beyond the fleshly realm, full of the "holy fire" of the earlier "Sailing to Byzantium" and as such it evokes a paradise that a symbolist poet yearns to attain but knows "that moment though eternal in the Daimon passes from us because it is not an attainment of our whole being."[29] The instant the poet beholds the Byzantine glory of all complexities "Dying into a dance, / An agony of trance," he sees as much as participates and embodies the fleeting equipoise that, representing the perfect proportion of the dancing body that one cannot tell from the dance, invokes Unity of Being. Yet, Byzantium is no "paradiso terrestre" and so Unity of Being is broken as the poet's eye moves to behold a vision of souls entering the paradise. Despite its being a disembodied place, Yeats's Byzantium is full of fleshly life: its blood, agony, and trance. Compared to the Zagreus world of marble repose, Byzantium is a breathing city, its offer of Unity of Being nearly tangible. Canto XVII thus represents logopoeia in its emotionally starkest form rather than living verse.[30] With this point in view, Yeats regarded Dorothy Wellesley as an opposite to Pound. All his work, he told Wellesley, was "a single strained attitude instead of passion, the sexless American professor for all his violence" (*LDW* 23). By contrast, "To Dorothy Wellesley nature is a womb, a darkness; its surface is sleep, upon sleep we walk, into sleep we drive the plough, and there lie the happy, the wise, the unconceived" (*CW5* 197). Whereas she offered emotional and rhythmical intensity, Pound, according to Yeats, saw nothing but patterns, symphonies, fugues and violent systematization of Unity of Fact.

The youngest generation of "moderns" that Yeats included in *The Oxford Book*, "the Auden school" included MacNeice, Spender and Day Lewis. In the broadcast, he put them in the line of Eliot and the war poets, adding that "Some of these poets are Communists, but even in those who are not, there is an overwhelming social bitterness" (*CW5* 95). Yeats's estimation of those poets, "a school […] I greatly admire" (*CW5* 193), is at least as ambiguous as his perception of Eliot and Pound: "I can seldom find more than half a dozen lyrics that I like, yet in this moment of sympathy I prefer them to Eliot, to myself—I too have tried to be modern" (*CW5* 200).[31] Although his preference is firmly on the side of Wellesley, Turner, and the Irish new romantics such as Gogarty, the poets of the 1930s have an allure for Yeats, even if only to perpetuate the conflict between heroic and objective-materialist poetry. This transpires from his early letter to Wellesley where he explains the heroic mood by his customary reference to Ernest Dowson's "Villanelle of the Poet's Road": "Unto us they belong, / Us the bitter and gay, / Wine and women and song" (misquoted in *LDW* 7; quoted in *CW3* 241); this he then compares to the new generation of poets:

> When there is despair, public or private, when settled order seems lost, people look for strength within or without. Auden, Spender, all that seem the new movement *look* for strength in Marxian socialism, or in Major Douglas; they want marching feet. The lasting expression of our time is not this obvious choice but in a sense of something steel-like and cold within the will, something passionate and cold. (*LDW* 7)

There is a degree of unacknowledged celebration in the suggestion that "they want marching feet." Marching held some appeal to Yeats who only a few years before wrote songs for the Blueshirts, much given to parading in uniform. Also, by recognizing "something passionate & cold" about the verse of Auden and Spender, Yeats admits them to his singing school, "cold / And passionate as the dawn" (*VP* 348). Furthermore, as with Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*, it was drama—in this case Auden and Christopher Isherwood's collaboration—that appealed to Yeats more than the poetry. In March 1937, he told Doone that he "thought your production of the Auden play [*Dog beneath the Skin*] almost flawless the play it self in parts magnificent" (*CL InteLex* 6858). What Yeats must have found congenial in the play was its radically anti-realist and blatantly immoral portrayal of the modern world's failures. The decay of aristocracy, dishonesty of press, infantile solipsism of poetry, idolatry of science, and the inability to respond to the madness of production-obsessed regimes (in the play, the regime is implied to be the Nazis) all lead to "Despair so far invading every tissue [that] it has destroyed […] the hidden seat of the desire and the intelligence."[32]

What Yeats could not accommodate in the "Auden school" was their mutual resemblance, which was not politically motivated but rather resulted from "the contemplation of fact [that] has compelled them to seek beyond the flux something unchanging, inviolate, that country where no ghost haunts, no beloved lures because it has neither past nor future" (*CW5* 201). Although such features of their poetry as searching for "something unchanging, inviolate" would seem reminiscent of Yeats's own work, they fail in Yeats's eyes in a similar manner to Pound in that the search for what lies beyond the chaos of the present moment leads to a still paradise. This is evident in his observation that "We have been gradually approaching this art [of 'the Auden school'] through that cult of sincerity, that refusal to multiply personality which is characteristic of our time"; therefore, in the work of the poets of the 1930s "stands not this or that man but man's naked mind" (*CW5* 200). It is "the Auden school" who are blamed for their dismissal of personality in favor of psychological objectivism, which Yeats already recognized in Eliot. Yeats discovered that remote and unattainable sincerity in poems like Auden's "This Lunar Beauty," which he included in *The Oxford Book* but which Auden himself later rescinded: "This lunar beauty / Has

no history / Is complete and early" (*OBMV* 429). While Auden is made into a cold quester after ideals, MacNeice is criticized for contemplating "the modern world with even greater horror than the communist Day Lewis" (*CW5* 201). In all those poets' work, there is no moment of transformation of the lived experience into poetic matter. Auden deflates the romantic ideal, as in these lines from "It's no use raising a Shout": "I don't want any more hugs; / Make me some fresh tea, fetch me some rugs" (*OBMV* 427); MacNeice mockingly looks about and sees the young who "Are always cowardly and never sober / Drunk with steam-organs thigh-rub and cream-soda" ("The Individualist speaks" *OBMV* 419); Day Lewis bitterly exposes inanity of ideals like love that surrender to material pressures: "Come, live with me and be my love, / And we will all the pleasures prove / Of peace and plenty, bed and board, / That chance employment may afford" (*OBMV* 415); finally Spender declares that "An 'I' can never be Great Man" because of its egotistic denial of life circumstances (*OBMV* 433).

For Yeats, the Auden school and communism both follow on from Stendhal's realism. In his 1930 Diary, he asserts that "Because Freedom is gone we have Stendhal's 'mirror dawdling down a lane'" (*Ex* 333), thus suggesting that the problem with realism (which Yeats tended to see narrowly, mainly in reference to the French nineteenth-century realist novel) is its inability to create "those extravagant characters and emotions which have always arisen spontaneously from the human mind when it sees itself exempt form death and decay, responsible to its source alone" (*Ex* 333). The same ineptitude extends to the Auden school, who will express "man's naked mind" but only in so far as it operates on a daily basis, while the mind's actual thoughts, when it folds into itself, are neglected. Therefore from mind to material reality, the 1930s poets seek Unity of Fact in representing the surrounding world. What matter are impersonal (though this is not their greatest sin) objective depiction, intellectual rather than emotional cognition and materialist bias.

If Eliot and Pound were the harbingers of Phase 23 of the historical cycle, revelling in reality, training their infallibly observant eye on each fragment of the world, and exposing the minutiae of the working of the human mind, then Auden, MacNeice, Spender, Day Lewis may be taken to signal Phase 24:

> Instead of burning intellectual abstraction, as did Phase 23, in a technical fire, it [Phase 24] grinds moral abstraction in a mill. This mill, created by the freed intellect, is a code of personal conduct, which being formed from social and historical tradition, remains always concrete in the mind. All is sacrificed to this code; moral strength reaches its climax. (*CW13* 84)

A man of this Phase does not look to tradition in a search for ancestral emotion that is renewed in song but for a code of conduct to be blindly followed. The

moral candor of the poems written by the 1930s generation that Yeats chose for *The Oxford Book* shows that in his estimation, Auden and company kept focus on the role of the poet as engaged in social issues. In a letter to Margot Collis, Yeats confessed, "I am trying to understand for the sake of my Cambridge [sic] Book of Modern Verse the Auden, Eliot school" and added "must define my objections to it, and I cannot know this till I see clearly what quality it has [that has] made it delight young Cambridge and young Oxford" (*CL InteLex* 6189). Three days later he restated his problem in a letter to Olivia Shakespear: "My problem this time will be: "How far do I like the Ezra, Eliot, Auden school and if I do not, why not?" Then he asks, "Why do the younger generation like it so much? What do they see or hope?" (*L* 833)[33]

Eventually, Yeats's selections from the modern movement for *The Oxford Book* came to symbolize the historical moment in the cycle of the world as envisioned by George's Instructors; the fact that reviewers almost unanimously condemned his anthology only confirmed him in his opinion. The romantic group, Wellesley, Turner, and the Irish poets, were brought together as a bulwark against the inexorable pull of modernity. As he declared in a letter to Laura Riding, the anthology was his "table of values" (*CL InteLex* 6541). In this sense, *The Oxford Book* reprises the role of *A Vision* which, as Yeats told Edmund Dulac in 1924 after completing the first edition, meant for him "a last act of defense against the chaos of the world" (*CL InteLex* 4525). Looking over his statements on Eliot, Pound, and Auden and his circle, one may remember that Yeats regarded his gyres as "stylistic arrangements of experience" that "have helped [him] to hold in a single thought reality and justice" (*AVB* 25). Complex though his appraisal of the moderns was, in the second part of the 1930s, Yeats made a last effort to find a way to reconcile reality and justice in his estimation of the poetry that he knew was avowedly preoccupied with both.

Notes

1. When completing the paper the author has been supported by the Foundation for Polish Science (FNP).
2. T. S. Eliot, *On Poetry and Poets* (New York: The Noonday Press, 1976), 297.
3. The effects of this reading on Yeats's post-1935 poetry are traced by Michael Cade-Stewart, "Mask and Robe: Yeats's *Oxford Book of Modern Verse* (1936) and *New Poems* (1938)," *YA* 18, 221–258.
4. Louis MacNeice, *The Letters of Louis MacNeice*, ed. J. Allison (London: Faber and Faber, 2010), 289.
5. The term modern poets, rather than modernist, is used throughout the present paper to collectively refer to Pound, Eliot, Auden, MacNeice and Day Lewis. I avoid modernist so as not to confuse the meanings of modernism that would have been familiar to some poets in the 1930s, following the first use of the term by Robert Graves and Laura Riding in their anthology *A Survey of Modernist Poetry* (1927), and what currently is denoted by it.

6. Quoted in R. F. Foster, "Fascism," in *W. B. Yeats in Context*, ed. David Holdeman and Ben Levitas (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 218.
7. The most consistent argument for Yeats's involvement with fascism and Nazism is developed by W. J. McCormack, *Blood Kindred* (London: Pimlico, 2005).
8. David Bradshaw, "Eugenics: They Should Certainly Be Killed," in *A Concise Companion to Modernism*, ed. David Bradshaw (Maldon: Blackwell, 2003), 48.
9. See Fran Brearton, *The Great War in Irish Poetry: W. B. Yeats to Michael Longley* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 61.
10. T. S. Eliot, *The Sacred Wood* (London: Methuen, 1960), 100.
11. Eliot, *The Sacred Wood*, 98.
12. William Blake, *Jerusalem*, in *Poems and Prophecies* (London: Everyman's Library, 1976), 256. Yeats commends that fragment in "The Philosophy of Shelley's Poetry" (*CW4* 60); Yeats refers to a number of fountains in Shelley's work (*CW4* 62), principally to *The Revolt of Islam*, in *Poetical Works*, ed. Thomas Hutchinson (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), 67, 105, 109, 151; *Prometheus Unbound*, in *Poetical works*, 250, 246; and *Rosalind and Helen*, in *Poetical Works*, 169.
13. Charles I. Armstrong, *Reframing Yeats* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 17.
14. Richard Greaves, *Transition, Reception and Modernism in W. B. Yeats* (London: Palgrave, 2001), 24.
15. John Kelly, "Eliot and Yeats," *YA* 20, 185, 191–92. Kelly sees a fundamental affinity between "Yeats's dictum that it 'is not permitted to a man, who takes up pen or chisel, to seek originality, for passion is his only business." Although by "passion" Yeats means an intense emotion that has been refined through centuries of existence in the Anima Mundi, his insistence on a heightened drama would have been uncongenial to Eliot, a point that Kelly pays little attention to.
16. Longley argues that "In 'Poetry and Tradition,' Yeats describes himself as 'seeing all in the light of European literature;' regrets that power has passed to 'small shopkeepers, to clerks;' and ends by lamenting (Ireland's) failure to 'fill our porcelain jars against the coming winter.' That almost seems a template for 'The Waste Land.' Yeats and Eliot also overlap in recommending tradition to other poets. First, they both attack Wordsworthian subjectivity. Yeats's 'perfection of personality, the perfection of its surrender' surely influences Eliot 'not expression of personality, but an escape from personality.' […] Second, Yeats advises 'long frequenting of the great Masters;' Eliot says: 'Tradition […] cannot be inherited […] you must obtain it by great labour.'" *Yeats and Modern Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 45. See also Kelly, "Eliot and Yeats," 211–12.
17. T. S. Eliot, *The Letters of T. S. Eliot: 1923–1925*, ed. Valerie Eliot, Hugh Haughton (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 39.
18. Longley, *Yeats and Modern Poetry*, 47–48.
19. T. S. Eliot, *Murder in the Cathedral* (London: Faber and Faber, 1965), 79.
20. Eliot, *Murder in the Cathedral*, 52.
21. There may have been a note of ingratiation in the praise, given that Eliot was then serializing Yeats's *Trembling of the Veil* in the *Criterion*. If so, Eliot decided to play along, expressing "a very great satisfaction that you like *The Waste Land*." *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, 22.
22. This is partly due to the fact that Pound's early poetry was written in the Yeatsian vein. The last poem of Pound that Yeats praised was the first half of part one of *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley*: "The first 14 pages [of *Mauberley*] have an extraordinary distinction, & an utterly new music. […] [T]here certainly you have discovered yourself—a melancholy full of wisdom & self knowledge that is full of beauty—style which is always neighbour to nobility when it is neighbour to beauty, a proud humility, that quality that makes ones hair stand up as though one saw a spirit. You have gripped all that now" (*CL InteLex* 3771).

23. Ezra Pound, *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* (London: The Ovid Press, 1920), 9.
24. Ezra Pound, *The Cantos of Ezra Pound* (New York: New Directions, 1983), 27.
25. T. S. Eliot, *To Criticize the Critic and Other Writings* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1955), 182.
26. Ezra Pound, *Ezra Pound to his Parents. Letters 1895–1928* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 565.
27. Daniel Albright, "Early Cantos I-XLI," in *The Cambridge Companion to Ezra Pound*, ed. Ira B. Nadel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 79.
28. See Sean Pryor, *W. B. Yeats, Ezra Pound and The Poetry of Paradise* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 73.
29. Quoted in Richard Ellmann, *The Identity of Yeats* (London: Faber and Faber, 1964), 221.
30. Pound defines it as "the dance of the intellect among words." *Literary Essays* (New York: New Directions, 1968), 25.
31. This is a perplexing pronouncement. Yeats may have been alluding to just that statement when he wrote to Eliot to make matters straight: "This morning I got, in a letter from a friend, an extract from The Observer saying that in my forthcoming anthology I preferred MacNeice & Auden to you. I have done nothing of the kind" (*CL InteLex* 6704).
32. W. H. Auden, Christopher Isherwood, *The Dog beneath the Skin, or Where Is Francis?* (London: Faber and Faber, 1944), 56.
33. The dating of this letter in *CL InteLex* 6191 is 28 February 1935.

Centennial Reflections at the New York Japan Society: *Certain Noble Plays of Japan* (1916) and *At the Hawk's Well* (1916)

W. Anthony Sheppard

The year 1916 proved highly significant in the life and career of W. B. Yeats. In addition to the momentous impact of the Easter Rising, Yeats published the highly influential *Certain Noble Plays of Japan* (hereafter, *CNPJ*), a collection of Japanese Noh plays translated by Ernest Fenollosa, and "chosen and finished" by Ezra Pound, for which Yeats provided an extensive and personal introduction. Yeats also premiered *At the Hawk's Well* in 1916, the first of his "plays for dancers" inspired by Japanese Noh. The centennial of these two major works of intercultural theater, and their continuing influence, was marked in Fall 2016 by the Japan Society in New York City with an exhibition, performances, lectures, gallery talks, workshops, and publications. At the center of this centennial celebration was the theater piece and installation entitled *At Twilight (After W. B. Yeats' Noh Reincarnation)* by the British artist Simon Starling.

Much of Yeats's introduction to *CNPJ* is devoted to discussion of what Noh has to offer modern Irish theater and how he has created a new theatrical form inspired by this exotic model. He states that these particular Noh plots seem to mirror Irish legends and that Noh has inspired him to invent "a form of drama, distinguished, indirect and symbolic, and having no need of mob or press to pay its way—an aristocratic form." The routes of cultural transmission leading from Noh theater to Yeats's "plays for dancers" is as fascinating as it is circuitous, for Yeats never directly experienced Noh himself. The cross-cultural encounters leading to the publication of *CNPJ* may be traced back to the celebrated American zoologist Edward Sylvester Morse, who lived in Japan for extended periods from 1877 to 1883 and served as a distinguished professor in the Imperial University at Tokyo. In January of 1883 Morse began a series of lessons in Noh singing—becoming the first American (to my knowledge) to study any form of Japanese music performance. Like Morse, Ernest Fenollosa hailed from Salem, Massachusetts. With Morse's encouragement, Fenollosa arrived in Japan in 1878 to serve as a Professor of Political Economy and Philosophy. Fenollosa ended up becoming the premier American authority on Japanese art, serving as the director of the Imperial Museum in Tokyo and the Curator of Oriental Art at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. In 1879 Fenollosa met former President Ulysses S. Grant who was on a goodwill tour of

Japan. Grant famously enjoyed a demonstration of Noh theater, allegedly urging the Japanese to preserve the art form and sparking Fenollosa's own interest in Japanese music and theater. In his study of Noh singing, Fenollosa literally picked up where Morse had left off—taking over Morse's lessons when the scientist departed for the United States in February 1883. Posthumously, through his literary executor Ezra Pound, and with the crucial endorsement of Yeats, Fenollosa became the primary catalyst for the later Euro-American modernist interest in Japanese theater and poetry with the publication of *CNPJ*.[1]

It is clear in the introduction to *CNPJ* that Noh inspired a new conception of theater for both Yeats and Pound, a ritualistic approach that featured nonrealistic and simple stage setting, the use of masks for main characters, and the importance of minimal musical accompaniment and intoned text. Yeats's four Noh-inspired "plays for dancers" consist of *At the Hawk's Well* (1916), *The Only Jealousy of Emer* (1919), *The Dreaming of the Bones* (1919), and *Calvary* (1920). *At the Hawk's Well* and *The Only Jealousy of Emer* form part of Yeats's cycle of plays devoted to the legends of the Irish hero Cuchulain. In *At the Hawk's Well*, set in "the Irish Heroic Age," Cuchulain seeks the well of immortality. He meets an Old Man at the well who warns him of the futility of his quest. Cuchulain is transfixed by the Hawk-like Guardian of the Well and misses his opportunity to drink from the magic water. He then embarks on a battle with the fierce mountain women and thus begins his heroic and tragic destiny. This play is based loosely on the plot of *Yoro*, translated by Fenollosa but not selected for publication by Pound, in which a young man seeks an immortal water for the benefit of his Emperor.[2] The "noble plays of Japan" assisted Yeats in his efforts to invent an "aristocratic" and ritualistic theater that could call up the heroic ancestral spirits of ancient Ireland for an exclusive and receptive audience composed of "the right people" in the privacy of the aristocratic drawing rooms of his patrons.[3]

In a nod to the original aristocratic salon performance context of *At the Hawk's Well*, as well as to Noh's origins as a form of outdoor theater, Starling's *At Twilight* premiered on the grounds of the stately Holmwood House in Glasgow in August 2016, produced by The Common Guild. Created in collaboration with the "theatre maker" Graham Eatough, *At Twilight* is a densely layered and self-reflective piece, which incorporates sections of *At the Hawk's Well* in alternation with lecture-format material on the relationship between Yeats and Pound and on the historical context of the original play's creation. In a sense, *At Twilight* functions much like a Noh ghost play, calling to the present major cultural figures from the past in a highly framed dramatic structure. Two actors assume the roles of Starling/Yeats/Old Man and Graham/Pound/Young Man (Cuchulain), thereby conflating the symbolic drama of *At the Hawk's Well* with the competitive relationship between Yeats and Pound and the contemporary collaboration between Starling and Graham, each of whom presumably

Figure 1: The Yeats and Old Man masks in Starling's installation. Photo by Richard P. Goodbody.

attempted to gain artistic immortality at the spring of Japanese Noh.[4] The two actors also assume the masks of other historical, fictional, and symbolic figures associated with the Yeats artistic circle and the First World World War period as *At Twilight* imaginatively explores the creative context and premiere of *At the Hawk's Well*. The two actors end the play by donning an Eeyore costume—a rather whimsical reference to the fact that Stone Cottage, which Yeats and Pound shared during the creation of *CNPJ* and *At the Hawk's Well*, was located in Ashdown Forest, the inspiration for the One Hundred Acre Wood of A. A. Milne's *Winnie-the-Pooh* books which appeared ten years later.[5] The role of the Guardian of the Well/Hawk is represented by an onscreen dancer: a practical solution that also projects the magical, transient, and utterly separate nature of the Hawk. Sections of Yeats's play and the lecture material interrupt each other and then repeatedly pick up from where they left off. The Graham character, eager to see his production of *At the Hawk's Well* proceed, is clearly annoyed by the Starling character's didactic interruptions and declares "I think that's pretty clear now Simon, it's all in the play"—which, of course, is "in the play" as well. The play and exhibition catalog have been published by The Common Guild and the Japan Society in a very handsome format that resembles the design of the 1916 publication of *CNPJ*.[6]

The Japan Society exhibit, *Simon Starling: At Twilight (After W. B. Yeats' Noh Reincarnation)*, which was on view from 14 October 2016 to 15 January

2017, provides another layer to Starling's work, taking us intellectually and historically behind the scenes of the making of *At the Hawk's Well* and *At Twilight*. The installation consists of an antechamber, two primary rooms connected by a transitional mirrored room displaying costumes from the Starling production, and a final room offering a documentary video of commentary and excerpts from the premiere of *At Twilight*. The installation suggests both aspects of violence and cultural reflection throughout. In the antechamber we encounter the two fencing rapiers employed by the Yeats and Pound characters in Starling's play, alluding to their artistic competition and to the fact that Pound attempted to teach the older poet how to fence during their time together at Stone Cottage. (Yeats's rapier was considerably frayed at the handle, perhaps suggesting his seniority.) We then enter a stunning and rather foreboding darkened large room in which are displayed the Noh-style masks of the various characters in *At Twilight*. These exquisite masks, made in collaboration with the Noh-mask artist Yasuo Miichi in Osaka, are dramatically hung from charred fragments of trees. We learn in the second main exhibition room that these sculptural stands were inspired both by a photograph of a First World War wasteland and by Goya's *The Horrors of War*. The layers of literary influence and networks of collaboration in both Starling's and Yeats's plays are therefore mirrored in these masks. For example, the "Michio Ito" Noh-style mask is made from paulownia wood, as are many traditional Noh masks, and is based on a 1926 mask-like bronze sculpture of Ito by Isamu Noguchi. The "Young Man" and "Old Man" masks also employ Noh mask carving techniques and materials and are based on Edmund Dulac's masks for the original production of *At the Hawk's Well*, which, in turn, had been inspired by Dulac's understanding of Noh theater.

Serving as a backdrop to the theatrical installation of these masks in this first room is a large screen on which is projected the Guardian of the Well's dance from the production of *At Twilight*, thus suggesting that we have entered onto the stage itself. The dance, choreographed by Javier De Frutos in association with the Scottish Ballet, was inspired in part by still photographs from the 1916 production of Yeats's play. The instrumental music for the Hawk's dance, composed by the Chicago-based jazz and film composer Joshua Abrams and Natural Information Society, has distant echoes of Indonesian gamelan and Chinese opera percussion, rather than featuring anything Japanese in style. In general, the minimal musical accompaniment for *At Twilight* proves effective and is certainly in the same spirit as Dulac's music for the original production of *At the Hawk's Well*. In both works, the few musicians are visible on stage as they are in Noh theater.

The second large room functions conceptually as a "backstage" scholarly exhibit to Starling's entire project. Upon entering this brightly lit exhibition

Figure 2: Overview of the "backstage" room in the exhibit. Photo by Richard P. Goodbody.

Figure 3: Simon Starling's "mind map" in the installation. Photo by Richard P. Goodbody.

space we are momentarily disoriented by wall-length mirrors at either end of the room, suggesting a potentially infinite number of connections between all of the art objects, photographs, and manuscripts on display and extending far beyond the confines of the exhibit. (These mirrors might also allude to the backstage "mirror room" in Noh theaters where the *shite* actor contemplates his reflection as he dons the mask.) A central focus is a large scale drawing, a diagram or "mind map" that Starling created to ponder multiple cultural roots and branches connected to Yeats's *At the Hawk's Well*. For example, Starling draws connections not only between the blasted tree limbs

supporting the masks of *At Twilight*, images of the First World War, and Goya's depiction of war's aftermath, but also with the traditional pine-tree decoration in Noh theaters, the mythic Irish faerie trees, and the tree under which Vladimir and Estragon sit in Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, noting that Beckett cited Yeats's play as a major influence.[7] This room displays an astonishing number of objects and original documents associated with *At the Hawk's Well* and with Noh—in effect, realizing in three-dimensional space Starling's own "mind map" for *At Twilight*. We find Yeats's original letters to Edmund Dulac, on loan from the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas at Austin, revealing the poet's concerns about how *At the Hawk's Well* would fare when presented in New York for the general public rather than for his ideal initiated audience. Constantin Brancusi's 1928 gleaming bronze abstract sculpted portrait of Nancy Cunard is also on display as it served as the model for the "Nancy Cunard" mask employed in *At Twilight*. (*At the Hawk's Well* premiered at the Cunard family home in London, and Pound and Cunard were intimately associated during this period.) Starling's installation and play are highly stimulating for any student of European modernism, though the content is not quite as revelatory in terms of uncovering cultural history and drawing connections as is implied, since these relationships and convergences are familiar to Yeats scholars.

Rather than producing Starling's play, the Japan Society presented the Tokyo-based Kita Noh school in performances of plays selected from *CNPJ* and from the second Fenollosa/Pound collection, *'Noh', or, Accomplishment: A Study of the Classical Stage of Japan*, which also appeared in 1916. The first program on 19 November offered a selection of highlights from five plays presented in different traditional formats, and the second evening featured complete performances of *Kayoi Komachi* and *Shojo-midare*. The selections appeared to have been made with the New York audience in mind, featuring dramatic battle scenes (as in *Kumasaka*, during which the audience audibly gasped in response to a stunning spinning leap) and comic episodes (as in a display of divine drunkenness in *Shojo*). The theater at the Japan Society is a very good size for Noh performances and is suitably transformed to include a reasonable semblance of the *hashigakari* entrance bridge, the four pillars, and the beautiful painted pine background of the Noh stage. Two video screens provided well-timed English translations. The generational depth of the Kita school was evident in these performances led by Japanese National Living Treasure Tomoeda Akiyo, whose own performance of an excerpt from *Tamura* without a mask was impressively intense. A workshop on Noh movement and instruments led by some of the younger members of the Kita company made absolutely clear the level of accomplishment required by Noh. When I found myself unable to produce almost any sound at all on the larger hand drum

Figure 4: The Kita Noh company performance at the Japan Society. Photo courtesy of the Japan Society.

(the *otsutzumi*), the professional player told me not to feel discouraged since it had taken him three years of study before he had achieved a good tone on the instrument himself.

In the afternoon of the first performance Tomoeda Akiyo gave a brief gallery talk in the Starling exhibition where he singled out one Noh mask for particular praise, noting that it was perfectly installed with a slight downward tilt as it would be on an actor's face, thereby appearing alive and dramatic. In contrast, he felt that the other Noh masks in the gallery were displayed as mere lifeless objects. It was clear that Tomoeda viewed Starling's installation entirely through the eyes of an active performer. He pointed out that the photographs of the original Yeats production and the video of the Hawk's dance in *At Twilight* did not much resemble Noh movement, though he felt that both exhibited a clear depth of performance spirit. In a public conversation with me prior to the start of the first performance, Tomoeda related that he found performing new works, such as the various Noh versions of *At the Hawk's Well* based on Yeats's play, more challenging than performing traditional plays because there was less for him to draw on, and, therefore, new Noh works required him to assume a more creative role as an actor. He has played both the Old Man and the Hawk in Noh versions of *At the Hawk's Well* at various points in his career and

explained to the audience that Yeats's tale has been one of the most frequently performed in new Noh plays precisely because its symbolic plot holds something very basic and universal for all people.

Yeats concluded his introduction to *CNPJ* rather wistfully: "for though my writings if they be sea-worthy must put to sea, I cannot tell where they may be carried by the wind." Yeats's interest in Noh launched a cycle of global cross-cultural influence and inspiration, and I know of no more astonishing modernist example of this phenomenon than that represented by the flight patterns of *At the Hawk's Well*. Yeats's play owed much of its inspiration and subsequent voyages to the Japanese choreographer and dancer Michio Ito. Yeats celebrated Ito as the "tragic image that has stirred my imagination" and stated that Ito made *At the Hawk's Well* possible. Though Yeats and Pound turned to Ito as a primary source of information on Japanese Noh movement and production, Ito himself had little experience with traditional Japanese performance and, instead, was inspired by the modernist choreography of Nijinsky in Paris and Isadora Duncan in Berlin. By the time he met Pound in London in 1915 and began his professional dancing career, Ito was fully committed to the aesthetics of modern Euro-American dance. Following the 1916 premiere of Yeats's play, Ito left for the U.S. and went on to perform his own production of *At the Hawk's Well* at the Greenwich Village Theatre in New York in July 1918 with a new score by the famous Japanese composer Kosaku Yamada. Ito took this production to California in 1929 and to Japan in a 1939 performance. He returned to Japan for good in 1943, following his release from a Japanese-American internment camp. Ito had traveled around the globe and had inspired multiple writers, choreographers, and composers with elements of Japanese music, theater, and dance. Yeats's *At the Hawk's Well* was then adapted in 1949 as a Noh play, and it entered the Noh repertory as *Taka no Izumi*, as well as in several other versions, thus completing a most extraordinary circle of cross-cultural encounter, with further reflections appearing globally to this day.

Notes

1. For further discussion of Morse's and Fenollosa's study of Japanese Noh and of Fenollosa's attempts to transcribe Noh music, and Pound's omission of various orthographic details in his publication of Fenollosa's papers, see chapter 1 in my *Extreme Exoticism: Japan in the American Musical Imagination* (forthcoming). Yeats probably first learned of Noh from the theater director and designer Edward Gordon Craig, perhaps by reading a 1910 issue of Craig's *The Mask*.
2. *Yoro* has been cited for decades as the model for *At the Hawk's Well*, starting with Richard Taylor's book in 1976; see Richard Taylor, *The Drama of W. B. Yeats: Irish Myth and the Japanese Nō* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976).
3. For further discussion of the influence of Japanese Noh on Yeats as well as on the works of such figures as Bertolt Brecht, Paul Claudel, Benjamin Britten, and Harry Partch, see my

Revealing Masks: Exotic Influences and Ritualized Performance in Modernist Music Theater (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

4. I should note that Starling had already brought together Noh theater and masks and British artistic modernism in his 2010 film and installation *Project for a Masquerade (Hiroshima)*.
5. On the relationship between Yeats and Pound during this period, see James Longenbach, *Stone Cottage: Pound, Yeats, and Modernism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).
6. Simon Starling, *At Twilight* (Dent-de-Leone and New York: The Common Guild and the Japan Society, 2016).
7. See Katharine Worth, *The Irish Drama of Europe from Yeats to Beckett* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1978), chaps. 7 and 10.

A Review of *Yeats Annual* 20

Essays in Honour of Eamonn Cantwell, ed. Warwick Gould, *Yeats Annual* 20 (Cambridge, UK: Open Book Publishers, 2016), paperback, pp. xlvi+461, ISBN 978-1-78374-177-9

Reviewed by Edward Larrissy

With its eighteenth number in 2013 (reviewed by me in *RES* [2014]), *Yeats Annual* left its long-term publisher, Palgrave Macmillan, and moved to Open Book Publishers, which provides free and open online access, as well as paperback and hardback formats. The appearance, ethos and layout of the journal have scarcely changed, and provide for a generous supply of often beautiful illustrations. The familiar section on *A Vision*, "Mastering What Is Most Abstract," remains, and there is space for a number of detailed book reviews. It is still edited by Warwick Gould, as it has been since he took over from Richard Finneran in 1985.

The ethos to which I referred centers on the presentation of detailed research findings in conformity with rigorous scholarly discipline: these findings preponderantly comprise textual, contextual and biographical information, and over the years *Yeats Annual* has helped immensely to improve, and often indeed to build, what one might call the infrastructure of Yeats studies. Nevertheless, sallies into the more abstract grounds of literary criticism and analysis are not discouraged, as demonstrated by two articles in the current volume by Paul Muldoon and Helen Vendler. But, writing of the uses of the archive which prompted the dedication of this volume, the editor speaks of the value of bearing "continuing witness to what it was to read Yeats in his lifetime," and adds: "No amount of literary theory or post-colonial discourse can help us to do that" (69). One senses in these words that impatience with "theory" which motivated some scholars in the early years of *Yeats Annual*. There is much in the proposition, of course, but perhaps rather less than might appear, since for lack of a time machine the hermeneutic circle cannot be so decisively closed. Never will we be able to step back out of the living stream of our present. And Yeats can only speak so urgently to our current preoccupations because we discern their lineaments in his words. Furthermore, new methodologies or fields of study may offer enhanced ways of understanding the history of Yeats's "own lifetime," something which may be more scientifically done after the event than when the observer is immersed in living history.

For some years now, each volume in the series has been a "Special Number," loosely, or not so loosely, united by a special topic. The current issue is named *Essays in Honour of Eamonn Cantwell*, and the main articles consist of the texts

of lectures given between 2003 and 2008 as the University College Cork/ESB International W. B. Yeats Lecture Series. Cantwell, who amassed a large and rich collection of books by Yeats, was a member of the Electricity Supply Board (ESB), and the company administers the endowment he arranged for the lectures. In this volume, Crónán Ó Doibhlin provides an updated and corrected catalogue of Cantwell's collection, which was donated to the Boole Library.

The first lecture, by Warwick Gould, is on "Yeats and his Books." It does not limit itself to examples in the Cantwell collection but seeks to give enhanced substance to the long understood fact that the physical character of his books was a central preoccupation of Yeats. In this respect, Gould avowedly builds, as others have before him, on Hugh Kenner's seminal essay on "The Sacred Book of the Arts." But while Kenner was centrally concerned with Yeats's careful arrangement of a book's contents, including the juxtaposition as well as the order of poems, Gould shifts the emphasis towards the symbolic language of cover design and color, and puts his findings into dialogue with the perspective opened up by Kenner. He also contextualizes the efforts of Yeats and his design collaborators (e.g., Althea Gyles, Norah McGuinness, T. Sturge Moore). For instance, he glances at the green covers, adorned with shamrocks and harps, of earlier self-consciously Irish publications. This kind of imagery was anathema to Yeats, and he took a firm hand in guiding the design of his books away from sentimental Irishness, and towards a powerful symbolism which suggested Irish links to European and even "oriental" traditions: thus, Gould suggests the likely influence of a cover decoration of the Quran on Althea Gyles's knotwork design for *The Secret Rose* (1897). The conjoining of such perceptions with the scrutiny of the order of the poems between the covers offers the most up-to-date and comprehensive approach to "the book as artefact" in Yeats.

R. F. Foster's lecture, "'Philosophy and Passion': W. B. Yeats, Ireland and Europe," is one of the lectures which best fulfils the remit of accessibility one expects of a public lecture. It glances briefly at Yeats's many European literary interests and at the phenomenon of European Celticism, and its focus is almost entirely on Yeats's politics. The lecture spends much time specifying the development of Yeats's political position in the early years of the twentieth century in isolation from any European connection: his movement away from conventional nationalism, his caution about being boxed in politically. With the aftermath of the Great War and the Russian Revolution, the European perspective is visible once again, but Foster directs his interest chiefly at Yeats's positioning of himself vis-à-vis political forces in Ireland: repudiating the British dispensation, but opposed equally to the anti-Treaty forces and to Catholic conservatism. As for the European dimension, Yeats seems to have felt that fascism (unlike communism) would safeguard individualism, and this may have been one of the prompts, remote as it may seem, to his composition

of the notorious Blueshirt marching songs. Yet as we all know, he became disillusioned with the Blueshirts. There is little to surprise in this lecture, though there are some interesting suggestions, such as the one that Yeats wrote the marching songs because he needed a spur to composition.

Bernard O'Donoghue's lecture on "Yeats and Love" opts for the same approach as Foster's, in that it offers a lucid and accessible account of this important topic and would constitute a worthwhile introduction for the general reader. It finds that Yeats is more consistent and thoroughgoing in his adoption of the role of courtly lover than is any poet since the Renaissance. In this, as O'Donoghue makes clear, he is agreeing with Gloria Kline in *The Last Courtly Lover,* and he repeats her identification of the goodly number of poems which support that thesis. He adds to this ideas from the work of the cultural theorist Denis de Rougemont, specifically the idea that "courtly love" came from the Arab world via Muslim Spain, and that its introduction into the West set up an irreconcilable tension between the native patriarchal culture and the cult of the sensitive and self-denying lover who became a lady's vassal. This figure could transform itself into the bearer of political heresy and instability.

As the history of the tradition of courtly love and the design for *The Secret Rose* intimate, Muslim culture and philosophy were abiding interests of Yeats. The first version of *A Vision*, with its Judwalis and "Desert Geometry," offers a reminder of how suggestive he found the idea of Islamic magic. This had been the case from *Mosada* onwards, with its dramatization of the conflict between triumphant Spanish Catholicism and Moorish magic. In *Mosada* it is a woman who practises the latter. O'Donoghue agrees with Kline that one of the values to be found in the courtly love tradition, and accepted by Yeats, was the male poet's capacity to learn from a woman's intuition. But this fact can also acquire an "oriental" tinge, as confirmed by "The Gift of Harun al-Rashid" or "Solomon to Sheba." Could there be some kind of "post-colonial discourse" which would shed light on these connections?

O'Donoghue notes that a realization of the conventions governing Yeats's love poems offers a much-needed complement to biographical criticism, which is focused on his troubled relationship with Maud Gonne. O'Donoghue might have reminded his auditors of the uncanny lines on the *Daimon* to be found in *A Vision* A: "every woman is, in the right of her sex, a wheel which reverses the masculine wheel." He rightly refers to Yeats's borrowing of the title of "Ego Dominus Tuus" from Dante's *La Vita Nuova*, and it is worth remembering that these are the words spoken by Love, who is then seen to hold Dante's beating heart, finally persuading Beatrice to eat it. Yeats's investment in "courtly love" is profound, and it is intertwined with his most radical thoughts about the unavailability to our conscious minds of the forces that drive us, sometimes to our own destruction. If Yeats admired Dante as the "chief imagination of

Christendom," he nevertheless presumed to offer his own system, one that, like Dante's, would hold the destabilizing power of love within the same view as the impulse to build and measure.

Helen Vendler's lecture on "The Puzzle of Sequence: Two Political Poems" exemplifies the intense study of stanzaic form of which the most ambitious expression is *Our Secret Discipline: Yeats and Lyric Form* (2007), and her lecture concerns her discussion of "Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen" and "Blood and the Moon," drawn from that book. Sequences provide an opportunity for gauging not only the symbolism that may be implicit in a particular choice of stanza, but also what may be implied by juxtaposition and contrast. The methods used to insinuate significance may be "magical" (in a numerological manner) or derive from the "desire to exemplify a particular genre, rhythm, or stanza form" (120). In the case of "Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen" we begin with the stately Renaissance feel of the *ottava rima* stanzas in which Yeats recalls pre-war civilization. But the second section consists of one complicated ten-liner divided asymmetrically in point of rhyme and rhythm. It evokes the violent movement of history through the symbol of Loie Fuller's Chinese dancers, with their dragon and gong.

Paul Muldoon's "Yeats and the Refrain as Symbol" fastens on the way in which the refrain crystallizes and intensifies a feature implicit in all writing and reading: the capacity "to represent at once fixity and fracture, regularity and rupture, constancy and change" (156). Muldoon's argument that the refrain is the performative working out of Yeats's symbolic system is convincing: it is "a physical manifestation of the winding stair and the perning gyre" (156). Rather than developing this perception towards some general point made, Muldoon, commendably I think, illustrates it by as sensitive and minute explication of the tensions between fixity and movement to be found in close readings of a number of poems, including "Easter, 1916" and "Long-legged Fly."

John Kelly's lecture on "Eliot and Yeats" is a welcome addition to the study of the relationship between these two poets, not least because of the solid work it conducts in finding and examining such a wide variety of interactions and mutual references. He is able to draw upon the newly available letters between both poets, as well as hitherto uncollected articles and prose "to suggest that the relationship was more complex and less antipathetic than has hitherto been thought" (180).

Kelly notes the divergent paths each poet pursued from a starting point of shared anxiety lest history should be merely an absurd process of endless repetition: "But whereas Yeats defiantly sought to redeem the world through Imagination" (184), Eliot returned to Christianity. I would add that even this difference masks similarity. "Imagination" is a big word, and a similar point might have been conveyed by recalling that Yeats's ambitious esoteric system

involves structure and measure, and a complex interpretation of history, fit to vie with orthodox Christianity. It is relevant that both poets admired Dante as the exponent of the coherent beliefs of a unified culture.

Kelly refers to Yeats's transient interest in Madame Blavatsky (201), and to the not entirely satirical portrayal of Madame Sosostris in *The Waste Land*. But while he thinks it significant that Jessie L. Weston consulted Yeats about the Tarot, it is surely of equal significance that she had been a member of the occultist Quest Society, founded in 1897 by G. R. S. Mead, who had been Madame Blavatsky's London secretary. Weston saw the Grail legend and esoteric traditions through the same lens, and this perspective is relevant to Yeats and Eliot: they shared a fascination with the vigor and symbolic cogency of ancient sacred rituals, combined with a hunger to find contemporary forms which could convey that vigor and thus renew modernity by connecting it to ancient springs. This hunger for what is urgent and direct inspires their shared hatred for what Yeats called "opinion" in verse.

After the lectures come a number of "Research Updates and Obituaries." Colin Smythe looks at the textual history of *Mosada*. Gould finds *The Flying Dutchman* in the background to the same work. Geert Lernout considers the influence of the Indian mystic Tukaram on Yeats. Günther Schmigalle writes on Yeats's acquaintance with Max Dauthendy and James and Theodosia Durand. Deirdre Toomey finds "Three Letters from Yeats to the Anarchist Augustin Hamon." John Kelly has discovered some "ghost-writing" that Yeats undertook for the Irish diva Sarah Allgood, allowing her more time for the Abbey. The obituaries, by Nicholas Burke and Richard Allen Cave, are those of Jon Stallworthy and Katharine Worth.

The Section on "Mastering What Is Most Abstract" is given over to a review essay by Colin McDowell on the recent Harper and Paul edition of *A Vision* (1937), and the book reviews cover recent work by W. J. McCormack, Winifred Dawson, Brian Arkins, and Ann Margaret Daniel—whose edition of Olivia Shakespear's *Beauty's Hour* is found by Deirdre Toomey to be impeccable.

A Review of *The Adulterous Muse*

Adrian Frazier, *The Adulterous Muse: Maude Gonne, Lucien Millevoye and W. B.Yeats* (Dublin: The Lilliput Press, 2016), paperback, pp. 320, ISBN 978-1-84351-678-1

Reviewed by Anne Margaret Daniel

At nineteen, with the death of her father, Edith Maud Gonne was an orphan. She and her younger sister Kathleen lived unhappily in London, dependent upon the severe guardianship of their uncle William Gonne. At twenty, Gonne met Lucien Millevoye, sixteen years her senior, at a French spa town where they had both gone for their health in the summer of 1887, and they were soon lovers. When she turned 21, in December 1887, she inherited thousands of pounds from both parents, and independence therewith. Gonne was 23 when she bore a son to Millevoye in Paris. They continued their affair until the middle of 1898.

Adrian Frazier says his first thought for the book that became *The Adulterous Muse* was "Maud Gonne in France." Frazier's story of a woman best known for her connections to Irish politics and to an Irish poet showcases her life as a Parisienne—and it is the stronger for it. Gonne spent much of her life in France, and this shaped both her and her political career far more than has been acknowledged before. The heart of Frazier's book is not W. B. Yeats's well-worn, lovelorn relationship with Gonne, but the life she had with, and without, Lucien Millevoye in that last crashing decade of the *fin de siècle*.

Millevoye, a right-wing writer, editor and politician, was a passionate supporter of General Georges Boulanger. When Gonne and Millevoye met, Boulanger and his "boulangistes" were on a fast rise to power in Paris that crashed down just as speedily in early 1889. That Gonne and Millevoye named their son, conceived in the wake of Boulanger's fall, Georges marks the ruined leader's importance to them both. The attentive historical research Frazier has done on both Millevoye's intense and dramatic involvement with the Boulangistes and, in a more peripheral way, the Dreyfus affair, is fascinating. Frazier's account helps to explain in significant ways, and for the first time, some of the appeal that Millevoye—in Gonne's words "a tall man of between thirty and forty [who] looked ill"—had for her in the first place.

Their affair, not so secret in Paris (and Frazier shows how Gonne worked hard to keep it unknown in Dublin), gives us "Maud Gonne lit up in her full Parisian flower." I would like to know even more of Gonne's life in Paris, now—what she attended in the evenings, the restaurants where she liked to go, with whom she associated socially, and who from these circles knew about

Millevoye—as well as more of her life in Normandy. She was a rich, independent woman, and enjoyed many things about these privileges, not least the safety and freedoms of living much of the first half of her life outside Ireland. "The Irish Joan of Arc" she may have been, but both parts of that phrase matter immensely in knowing Maud Gonne.

When a book's first chapter is entitled "The Origins of Maud Gonne's Hatred of the English," its trajectory can be no surprise. English-born, a point that would often be used against her in the future, Gonne abjured that heritage early on, and chose her own homelands, made her own roots and mythologies. Frazier has uncovered interviews and accounts of Gonne in the French press that show her brightness and wit, her physical and intellectual attractions, in a fresh and thought-provoking way. Details abound, and lead instantly to further questions: that Gonne's Dublin doctor for decades was writer, poet, politician and translator George Sigerson is useful to know, but that Sigerson was, as Frazier notes in passing, "a student of Dr. Charcot in France" stopped me cold. Jean-Marie Charcot, who experimented on "hysterical" women at the Salpêtrière, taught Gonne's doctor? and Sigerson returned to Paris to keep up with Charcot's experiments? This is a connection worth further investigation.

Rest assured, Yeats is in the subtitle of *The Adulterous Muse*, and his pursuit of Gonne in poetry and in person is also a large part of the book. The question of what Yeats knew about Gonne and Millevoye, and when, from the time he met her in 1889 and what he famously termed the "troubling" of his life began, may never be definitely answered—not least because Gonne and Yeats, in their own accounts, said what suited them and much that may not be based in fact. He was not utterly fooled about her double life at all, as Frazier rightly says on the first page of his introduction. Certain poems of Yeats's from 1893—"On A Child's Death" and "The Glove and the Cloak," for instance—have long been recognized as written in response to the death of Georges. Frazier's reading of them as confirming Yeats's suspicion, or even recognition, that Georges was not adopted (as Maud had explained him) but was in truth her own son is speculative, but intriguing. Surely she kept Georges' existence only a semi-secret at best. For instance, one surviving contemporary photograph of Georges aged about one bears on the back the name and location of an English photographer's studio. This makes it overwhelmingly likely that Gonne brought her little boy to England in 1890 or 1891.

Yeats had another blatant clue delivered to him possibly as early as 1894. In Frazier's magisterial biography of George Moore, he notes that Moore began thinking of the novel that would become *Evelyn Innes*, using his new friend W. B. Yeats as his model for the hero, in early 1894. The first edition (Moore later revised it heavily) appeared in 1898, and Yeats—who along with Arthur Symons had read earlier drafts of the novel—made hay of his depiction as

musician Ulick Dean. He wrote to Lady Gregory in June 1898, getting the name of his character not quite right, and with double-edged advice designed to cut into Moore's sales: "Get Moores *Evelyn Innes* from the library. I am 'Ulric Dean,' the musician." Two weeks later, he reported to Gregory that he was reading *Evelyn Innes* aloud to Maud Gonne.

Central to the plot of *Evelyn Innes* is Evelyn's performance as Richard Wagner's Isolde. It is where she is first smitten with the Yeats character. Moore heard the opera in London in 1892, and was smitten himself. Gonne, however, was at the première of *Tristan und Isolde*, at Bayreuth, in 1886; her father had taken her there. When she had her daughter by Millevoye in August of 1894, she named the baby Iseult. In *Evelyn Innes*, Ulick Dean is in love with a woman who lives in Normandy, but she rejects him for a "Protestant clergyman" and soon has a baby.

Here is George Moore, Yeats's new good friend, having Ulick Dean enter this novel as the man in charge of a production of a Wagner opera that takes up most of his relationship with Evelyn—and not any Wagner opera, but "Isolde" (Moore rarely refers to Wagner's opera in the text as *Tristan und Isolde*, just *Isolde*). And, quite shockingly surely for Maud Gonne as her friend Yeats read the novel aloud to her, Ulick Dean is in love with a woman who lives in Normandy, who has had a baby the year before by another man. One must surely ask: did Moore know not only the fact of Maud Gonne's motherhood, but the name of her little girl, as he wrote *Evelyn Innes* in 1895 and 1896? More importantly, did Yeats know? If so, we need to think more about exactly what precipitated the cataclysmic events of late 1898 in his life. If it wasn't, as we've long assumed from what Yeats says, his discovery of Maud's relationship with Millevoye and the fact she was a mother, then Yeats is misrepresenting this in his *Memoirs* to muddy another reason: his failure, when she had broken off her affair with Millevoye, to make a marriage with her—just as he would fail once more, years later, when she was a widow.

Frazier spends much time on Gonne's sexuality in her relationships with Millevoye, Yeats, and John MacBride. Yeats is the cypher here, for their relationship was notably without "physical love" until Gonne's involvements with both Millevoye and MacBride were over, and he and she were in their early forties. Marjorie Perloff, writing on "sexuality and subterfuge" in *Yeats Annual No. 7* (1990), is properly suspicious of Yeats's report that Gonne told him in 1898 that she had a "horror and terror of physical love." Perloff contrasts these words to Gonne's actions—"her protracted affair with Millevoye and subsequent elopement with MacBride, her numerous pregnancies"—and says that if "she really did tell [Yeats] that she had a horror of physical love, it may, accordingly, have been to spare him from the painful truth that she was not sexually drawn to him." Or, as Deirdre Toomey put it more bluntly, "her 'coldness' represents

perhaps her sense of chagrin at his feebleness." When Gonne and Yeats did sleep together in the everyday meaning of the phrase, Frazier records it harshly—almost as harshly as did Yeats himself: "Nothing could compare with the oft-imagined flesh of the muse; the uncovered body of a 42-year-old mother of three disenchanted him."

The supplanting of Maud and Iseult by Georgie Hyde-Lees is done swiftly by Frazier, far more swiftly than by Yeats: "While Yeats had difficulty getting the two Gonne women out of his sexual imagination—and his new wife into it—George by means of her automatic writing cast a spell over his thoughts sufficiently powerful to allow for two children to be born and a compendious, idiosyncratic occult system to be constructed (*A Vision*, 1925)." Yet Maud and Iseult figure prominently, to put it mildly, in the compendious *Vision* papers, in the *Visions* Notebook. And Yeats's definition of the imagination was born of Blake's, and while charged with the language of sex was driven by an engine stronger than sexuality. Consider the beginning of his 1897 essay on Blake and the imagination, in which there are the seeds of several poems and more: "There have been men who loved the future like a mistress, and the future mixed her breath into their breath and shook her hair about them, and hid them from the understanding of their times. William Blake was one of these men, and if he spoke confusedly and obscurely it was because he spoke things for whose speaking he could find no models in the world about him." And Yeats's preferred view of intercourse—to quote Deirdre Toomey—was "in conjugial (rather than conjugal) terms, as resulting in a Swedenborgian 'conflagration of the whole being' rather than mere children and domesticity." This was what mattered to Yeats, not the "tragedy of sexual intercourse[.]"

Yeats's former lover Olivia Shakespear was the woman who conducted him into his marriage to Hyde-Lees, who was her brother's stepdaughter. If anyone merits the title "the adulterous muse" for Yeats it is Shakespear, who technically fits the bill better than Gonne. To have her introduced here, at the Yellow Book supper at which she and Yeats met, as "the wife of Hope Shakespear" while Pearl Craigie, who was also present, is identified as "the novelist", emphasizes Shakespear's marital state, but elides the fact that she was herself a novelist by the time she met Yeats, with *Love on a Mortal Lease* and *The Journey of High Honour* (its title taken from Sidney's *Arcadia*) both in press by April 1894. She and Yeats were lovers while she was married, while Gonne and Yeats only consummated their relationship, and then quite briefly, as Frazier recounts, after her legal separation from MacBride. Indeed, Shakespear's centrality to Yeats's life, as friend, lover, correspondent, and muse (in which role Joe Hassett particularly features her in *The Muses of W. B. Yeats*), needs to be more widely acknowledged in accounts of Yeats's life and work—not least since, for all Yeats's reticence about this important relationship, it left its mark on so many

of the poems it is easy to think of as being "about" Gonne alone. Frazier's own reading of "Friends," among other poems, smartly acknowledges the danger of ascribing a one-on-one correspondence to any "she" or "her" in a Yeats poem.

Frazier's decision to conclude the book with two events, Yeats's marriage in October 1917, and Millevoye's death in March 1918, feels sudden, since those events did not mark the end of Gonne's connection to either man. It may be true that Gonne, no longer anyone's muse, "had no further need of any of them. She had her glory." Yet Gonne had become by then a national muse to many; her glory is not that she had such friends, or past lovers, but who she became in the days of the Irish Republic, and the Republic of Ireland, from 1918 until her death thirty-five years later. This story, told with redaction and personal agenda by Gonne in her autobiography *A Servant of the Queen* (1938), is essential to the full record of her life and accomplishments—as well as to accounting for her continuing impact on Yeats's life and imagination, as he continued to work out his resentments of and contemplate his failures with her, in *A Vision* and elsewhere. It could well fill another volume—"The Unadulterated Muse," perhaps.

A Review of *Irish Literature and the First World War*

Terry Phillips, *Irish Literature and the First World War: Culture, Identity and Memory* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2015), paperback and ebook, pp. 292, ISBN 978-3-03539-575-4

Reviewed by Jane Potter

William Butler Yeats infamously deemed Wilfred Owen "unworthy of the poet's corner of a country newspaper" and excluded him from the 1936 edition of the *Oxford Book of English Verse*. Just why the older poet, "celebrant of conflict and heroism," should have detested the younger so much has been explained by Jon Stallworthy: "they represented competing value-systems—Ancient and Modern, Homeric and humane—and the 1930s […] there could be no competition."[1] Yeats's own attitude to the war, articulated in "On Being Asked for a War Poem," is perhaps as well known—and as critically discussed—as his judgment of Owen:

> I think it better that in times like these
> A poet's mouth be silent, for in truth
> We have no gift to set a statesman right […] (*VP* 359)

Indeed, Yeats does not feature largely in Terry Phillips's book; as she asserts, "Subsequently, of course, the war was a significant influence on his development as a writer, but that is beyond the scope of this study" (86). His Irish countrymen and women, who *are* the focus of this study, were not silent, although their contributions to the literature of 1914–1918 have been largely overlooked, caught up in what has commonly been considered a cultural amnesia about and antipathy towards Irish participation in the First World War.

Such amnesia and antipathy are challenged by Phillips throughout *Irish Literature and the First World War: Culture, Identity and Memory*. For while historians such as Adrian Gregory and Keith Jeffrey have also called the "Irish amnesia" into question, less work has been done by literary scholars, and generally the focus has tended to be on poetry, either in critical studies (such as Fran Brearton's *The Great War in Irish Poetry* [2000]) or anthologies (like Gerald Dawe's *Earth Voices Whispering* [2008]). Phillips works on a broader canvas, which includes fiction, non-fiction, and drama as well as poetry.

Phillip's study is divided into two sections. The first, "War and Nation," focuses on writing produced during the war from both soldiers and civilians,

1. Jon Stallworthy, *Survivors' Songs: From Maldon to the Somme* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 87.

while the second, "Remembering War," turns attention to work ranging from the 1920s and 1930s (the years of the "War Books Boom") to the early twenty-first century. Eight main chapters thus cover a broad spectrum of writing by men and women, combatants and non-combatants, war-time contemporaries and post-war generations. Thus this is a longitudinal study that is necessarily selective, but one which manages to incorporate close readings alongside larger themes surrounding culture, identity and memory.

As their literary accounts reveal, Irishmen enlisted to fight in the Great War for a range of motives, informed by different social, political, religious, and cultural backgrounds, ones in which "the cultural influences of Britishness, Irishness and Englishness fluctuate[d] and relate[d] dynamically to one another, recognizing no impermeable boundaries" (20). For many, there was no incompatibility between "a self-conscious Irish identity" and "a civic patriotism towards Great Britain" (93). This is particularly exemplified by the poets considered in Chapter 1, especially Thomas Kettle and Francis Ledwidge. Although "the Irish political context" (22) was significant for both, for Ledwidge in particular; his "profound love of landscape," "his love of the countryside is a key factor in his love for Ireland," much like the English landscape was for Edward Thomas, Ivor Gurney, and Edmund Blunden. His "deepest loyalty was consistently to Ireland," yet he "believed that the war was just, that the German enemy was a threat to people in Ireland and elsewhere" (37). Whilst he was deeply affected by the 1916 Rising, Phillips argues that the "efforts to present Francis Ledwidge as a nationalist poet, a pro-war poet, or an anti-war poet are inevitably reductive and limiting, as are efforts to trace a steady movement of his opinions and concerns in one direction or another" (37). Kettle shared Ledwidge's "nationalist sympathies" and like him "saw no contradiction as a nationalist fighting in the army of Great Britain for a cause he perceived to be just, but saw himself first and foremost as an Irishman" (46).

The prose writings of Patrick MacGill (*The Amateur Army* [1915], *The Red Horizon* [1916], *The Great Push* [1916]) and St John Ervine (*Changing Winds* [1917]), which are the focus of Chapter 2, "Debating the Nation," combine often harrowing portrayals of actual war experience with reflections on the role as well as the motivation, despite horrific conditions, of the average soldier in the international conflict. In MacGill's *The Red Horizon* and *The Great Push*, in particular, the sustaining force is comradeship, "born of shared experience through suffering and deprivation, and most certainly not nationalism or even civic patriotism" (55).

From combatant writing, Phillips turns in Chapter 3 to the poetry of women, namely Katharine Tynan, Winifred Letts, and Eva-Gore Booth, in which the theme of "Nation and Religion" is particularly resonant, but which was interpreted in vastly different ways by each. Again, Tynan and Letts felt no

contradiction between their civic patriotism towards Britain in the war effort and their Irish nationalism, but Gore-Booth's resolute opposition to the war "was based on convinced pacifism not, as might be expected, on Irish nationalism" (88). For her, religious belief was "a powerful motivator for resistance" (116).

Patriotism comes under both subtle and explicit scrutiny in works considered in Chapter 4, in particular the novels of Mrs Victor Rickard (Jessica Louisa Moore) and the play *O'Flaherty, V.C.* by George Bernard Shaw. In Rickard's three novels set during the war, *The Light above the Crossroads* (1916), *The Fire of Green Boughs* (1918) and *The House of Courage* (1919), "obligation to one's nation is expressed in quasi-religious language, with references to martyrdom and self-sacrifice" and "an almost mystical attachment to the land" (122), but is nevertheless subtly subversive of too-easy patriotic platitudes. A much more explicit critique is apparent in Shaw's play, *O'Flaherty V.C.* (1915), which "set out to question the real weight" of various motives for enlistment, ranging from "a conviction of the justice of the cause, Irish nationalism, or loyalty to Britain," but which suggests that "the war, evil though it is, must be fought to prevent a greater triumph of militarism" (143). Such motivations and justifications were to ring hollow for Irish survivors in the inter-war period in the same way they did for those of other combatant nations.

Phillips's scrutiny of post-war writing is thus dominated by attention to "the mediated quality of memory and the variety of cultural forms such mediation might take" (145). Memory of the First World War is characterized by the individual/personal and the social/familial, with "collective memory" emerging from them, and beyond which exists official or public memory represented by national commemorations or institutions such as museums. In the Irish context, particularly after 1921, such shifting aspects of First World War memory take on more complexity, which the final four chapters of the book view through various lenses.

In Chapter 5, "Disenchanted Memory," Phillips reiterates one of her key arguments about Irish "amnesia" about the war: that the desire to forget was motivated more by emotion than politics. Literature of this period—including MacGill's *Fear!* (1921) and Liam O'Flaherty's *Return of the Brute* (1929), and Pamela Hinkson's *The Ladies' Road* (1932)—evinces "a range of responses from disillusion about the conflict to a more profound, and more all-embracing disillusion with human experience" (163). Of these, the most powerful is Sean O'Casey's *The Silver Tassie* (1927), which was rejected by Yeats for performance at the Abbey in 1928, a decision that Phillips suggests was partly "deliberate politically motivated amensia" (152). The disillusion of these prose works is also characteristic of the poetry produced in the post-war decades both in the Free State and in Northern Ireland, and is analyzed in Chapter 6, "Constructing

Memory, North and South," through the work of Thomas MacGreevy, Stephen Gwynne, Samuel McCurry, Thomas Carnduff, and Harry Midgley. How the artist plays a role in the formation of more current First World War collective memory is the subject of Chapter Seven, "Challenging Memory in Northern Ireland," through exploration of the poetry of Michael Longley and the plays of Christina Reid and Frank McGuinness. Chapter Eight investigates "Recovering Forgotten Memory" in the work of Jennifer Johnston, Sebastian Barry and Dermot Bolger, in which the divisions between the memory of the two Irelands is negotiated. Such recent works illuminate, in Phillips's view,

> a crucial difference between Northern Ireland, where remembrance as performance retains importance because of its inevitable political significance, and the Republic, where an absence of continuing political division means that remembering is much more a personal and family activity, which nevertheless requires accommodation in the collective memory. (240)

Phillips's Afterword, entitled "The Significance of Irish First World War Writing," is less successful than the preceding main chapters, being more of a summary than an "afterword" that pushes her arguments further or presents some new insights. It is rather repetitive of what has come before and misses an opportunity to summarize succinctly and forcefully the significance of the literature that has been highlighted, particularly in relation to the larger canon of First World War Literature. The centenary of 1914–18 has been an opportunity for historians and literary scholars alike to reassess long-held assumptions and well-worn interpretations about the war and the generation that experienced it. Phillips contributes to the project both of re-definition and rediscovery as she identifies and engages with the complexities and competing narratives that characterize Irish literature of the First World War, but I would have liked the Afterword to reflect more upon what Irish writing in particular adds to the larger global narrative.

That being said, this is a welcome overview of many neglected literary texts that challenges dominant assumptions about Irish participation in and memory of the First World War. Each chapter can be read separately, which is useful for teaching purposes, but taken together they represent a coherent and scholarly whole. Close readings illuminate larger themes, whilst paying particular attention to the nuances of individual texts and writers, and the chapters and sections are woven together well. Phillips persuasively demonstrates that Irish war literature, like the war literature of other nations, resists too-easy categorization and is a complex and fluid canon, where "dominant memory […] is only a memory in process" (255).

Remembering Katharine Worth (1922–2015)

Anthony Roche

Like so many others, I first met Katharine Worth at the Yeats International Summer School (in 1986). Three years later I had the pleasure as Associate Director of joining with Director Liz Butler-Cullingford in inviting Katharine back to Sligo to take a central and multi-tasking role in the theme of that year's school, "Yeats and Beckett." In all, she lectured and directed drama workshops at the summer school on eight occasions between 1967 and 1995. Katharine Worth's lectures in Sligo claimed a central space and importance for Yeats's lifelong experimentation as a playwright, drawing the listener in to the inner workings of the plays and unpacking the manifold meanings they contained. Her theater workshops were extraordinary: taking a global and wildly diverse group of students, she forged them into a coherent ensemble within a bare two weeks. She opened the drama workshop's production of *The Words Upon the Window-Pane* with a stunning *coup de theatre*. A curtain was rapidly drawn back to disclose the entire cast of a dozen or so standing and volubly speaking their lines at the same time; the curtain was pulled shut and when it once more opened the play proper began. What an arresting way to start a play about mediumship! Mrs. Henderson's different voices (Jonathan Swift and his women, etc.) were distributed out among various members of the cast. I will always hear the following line delivered in the distinctive child's voice adopted by one of the students: "Power all used up. Lulu can do no more." In another year at the Yeats School, when one of her key actors disappeared back at short notice to the United States, Katharine swooped on an unsuspecting Ron Schuchard, relaxing in the bar having given his lecture that morning. She said she had cast him as the father Maurteen Bruin in the Yeats play, *The Land of Heart's Desire*. Ron protested that he had never acted in a play in his life, but Katharine was having none of it: "she met my every protest with perfect persuasion until, knowing that I should not consent, I consented." During the week, under her patient coaching and encouragement, Ron gained the necessary confidence; but faced with the stage and the bright lights on opening night, he froze: "Katharine's soothing voice whispered 'Don't worry' off stage and prompted me, jump started me, back into the performance. All was well; I made it through on the grace of a great director."

When I first met Katharine Worth, I already knew and had drawn deeply upon her pioneering study, *The Irish Drama of Europe from Yeats to Beckett* (London: The Athlone Press, 1978). Far from seeing Yeats's drama as in any way marginal either in relation to his own writing career or the history of the

theater, Katharine placed his dramatic experiments at the centre of a European modernist tradition, at the cutting edge of the avant-garde in the early decades of the twentieth century. Her analysis opened up the various other artistic areas on which his drama drew—dance, music, design—and showed how, far from being an anachronism, Yeats's drama anticipated some of the most important developments in modern theater practice. In relation to Yeats's Irishness, Katharine's book drew a "line running from Synge through Yeats and O'Casey to Beckett" which she argued persuasively "has become the main line of modern drama" (121). *The Irish Drama of Europe from Yeats to Beckett* had a huge influence, both on theater practice and on criticism. Christopher Fitz-Simon, the then Artistic Director of the touring Irish Theatre Company, was so impressed by the book's argument that he produced a season comprising Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* and a double bill of Yeats's *On Baile's Strand* and Synge's *The Well of the Saints*. My 1994 monograph, *Contemporary Irish Drama: From Beckett to McGuinness*, signals its indebtedness to Katharine's study in its subtitle and opening chapter, "Yeats and Beckett: Among the Dreaming Shades." Her influence continues into the recent magisterial work by Michael McAteer, *Yeats and European Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), which shows how Yeats "worked in constant dialogue with new developments in London, Paris" and the rest of Europe (193).

By the time I met Katharine, difficult as it is to believe, given her energy and multiple activities, she had just retired. Richard Allen Cave's *Guardian* obituary of March 6, 2015, gives a vivid account of just how much she achieved in her academic career, notably as founder of the Department of Drama and Theatre at Royal Holloway, University of London. Cave remarks how "it was typical of her indomitable vision and drive that in 1978 she achieved the creation of a new department at a time when many arts departments were facing closure." Katharine Worth was in the vanguard of those who worked to establish drama and theater studies as a university discipline in which performance and its analysis would play a central role. In *The Irish Drama of Europe from Yeats to Beckett* she is often able to counter the dearth of Yeats productions in the professional theater by drawing on examples of productions of Yeats plays which she had directed with her students. Katharine was a mighty persuader, as the Ron Schuchard incident reveals, and even the notoriously reticent and reclusive Samuel Beckett was not immune. Katharine managed to persuade Beckett to allow her to dramatize his novella, *Company*, with the actor Tim Pigott-Smith, which went on to win a Fringe First at Edinburgh. When she was to deliver the opening lecture at a one-day University College Dublin conference on Brian Friel, designed to celebrate the playwright's seventieth birthday, I received a call from Brian asking me at what time Katharine would be speaking. When I chaffed him by saying, "What do you want to know for? You never go

to talks on your own work" he replied, "I'd like to pay my respects." So there was the notoriously shy and private Brian Friel the following morning in Newman House, seated very visibly in the back row for Katharine's lecture. Afterwards, as he and she laughed and chatted, I could see just how Beckett had opened up to the radiance of her personality and intelligence.

Katharine was a wonderful conversationalist and inherently sociable (one of the reasons, I would say, why she chose theater). She was the best of companions, balancing warm sympathy with keen intelligence, always animated and great fun, whether at dinner, at a play, or just going for a walk. She and I began a friendship at that first Sligo meeting which deepened and developed over the next twenty years. At least once a year, she would come to Dublin and I would go over to London and we would see plays together. Some of the highlights included Frank McGuinness's *Someone Who'll Watch Over Me* at the Hampstead, with Stephen Rea and Alec McCowen, and three nights in succession at the DruidSynge cycle of the plays in Dublin, where she was interviewed on the subject by Catherine Foley of *The Irish Times*. Probably the most special was when we attended (with Richard Allen Cave) a most unusual double bill at the Young Vic, pairing one act of Brian Friel's *Lovers* with a play by her beloved Maurice Maeterlinck, so central to the argument of *The Irish Drama of Europe*. As the latter unfolded, I felt I was watching an early version of Beckett's *Endgame*—the same silences and repetitions, the same ghostly scenario, the same "drama of the interior" (to use Katharine's phrase). I spoke about the connection afterwards—as if it was news to her! But she reacted with her usual grace and interest, as if she had not written pages on the same theme. Often, when she came to Ireland, she stayed with me or, later, with Katy and our two children (Katharine, herself the mother of three, was delightful and natural with them). On one occasion, as she notes in *Samuel Beckett's Theatre: Life Journeys* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), she and I visited the sites around Foxrock and the Ballyogan area associated with Beckett. I often stayed in her house in Teddington, with Katharine and her husband, George, the wonderful supportive presence in her life. George was the perfect English gentleman and a retired headmaster, with a quietly infectious sense of humor. He had a passion for clocks, with which he had filled their house, and there was the most extraordinary chiming every hour on the hour. I met their three grown up children on various occasions, especially Libby, who fittingly had come to teach drama and theater at Royal Holloway.

It was Libby who contacted me in February 2015 to say that Katharine had died and to invite me to the funeral in Teddington. Naturally, I went over, not only on my own behalf but also to represent her many Irish friends who could not be present. During the service, Libby read Yeats's poem, "The Wild Swans of Coole" and her son Christopher spoke of his mother's love of Ireland.

Afterwards Libby and I reminisced about the Yeats Summer School in Sligo and of the many times she had visited the School with Katharine when growing up. A commemorative day was held at Royal Holloway the following September to which I contributed a sheaf of memories by former directors of the Yeats Summer School who had invited Katharine over the years—Ron Schuchard, on whose account I have drawn here, but also Declan Kiberd, Liz Cullingford and Katharine's close friend, the late Barbara Hardy, who included the following wonderful memory: "Katharine singing round midnight as we gathered in the Imperial Hotel or the Social Centre, and once reading a short poem—I hadn't known she wrote poetry—at a student party." Richard Allen Cave presented the commemoration with natural grace and those on stage included the Irish actor Lisa Dwan, who recited some of Beckett's poems, and Christopher Worth, who spoke about his mother's work on Oliver Goldsmith and Richard Brinsley Sheridan. She wrote about all of the major Irish playwrights, from Goldsmith and Sheridan through to Beckett and Friel. But it was Yeats who remained at the centre of her creative attention, whose dramatic "deeps of the mind" she spent a lifetime exploring. It was this primal fact which made her daughter's reading of "The Wild Swans at Coole" during the service so moving. In 2003, I contributed an entry on Katharine to the *Encyclopedia of Ireland*, edited by Brian Lalor for Gill and Macmillan. Next time I saw her, I told her she had been given the ultimate accolade: that of honorary Irishwoman. I can still recall her delighted response. She deserved no less, for Katharine Worth was, in Declan Kiberd's words, "one of the presiding geniuses of Irish Studies in the latter decades of the twentieth century."

Notes on Contributors

Wayne K. Chapman is Emeritus Professor of English, Emeritus Editor of *The South Carolina Review*, and founding director (ret.) of Clemson University Press. He has authored or edited more than a dozen books since 1991, half of these on Yeats, including *Yeats and English Renaissance Literature* (Macmillan Press, 1991); *"The Countess Cathleen": Manuscript Materials*, with Michael Sidnell (Cornell University Press, 1999); *Yeats's Collaborations: Yeats Annual* 15, with Warwick Gould (Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); *"Dreaming of the Bones" and "Calvary": Manuscript Materials* (Cornell University Press, 2003); *The W. B. and George Yeats Library: A Short-title Catalog* (Clemson University Press, 2006); *Yeats's Poetry in the Making: Sing Whatever Is Well Made* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); and *Rewriting "The Hour-Glass": A Play Written in Prose and Verse Versions* (Clemson University Press, 2016).

Anne Margaret Daniel teaches literature at the New School University in New York City. Her articles, essays, notes, and reviews, covering topics from Oscar Wilde's trials to Bob Dylan and contemporary music, have appeared for the past twenty years in books, critical editions, magazines, and journals from *The New York Times* to *Hot Press* to *The Times Literary Supplement*. She has twice served as associate director of the Yeats International Summer School in Sligo. She is the editor of Olivia Shakespear's novella *Beauty's Hour* (Valancourt 2015); and her edition of the last complete unpublished short stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald, *I'd Die For You And Other Lost Stories*, will be published by Scribner/Simon & Schuster in April 2017. Anne Margaret lives in Manhattan and in upstate New York.

Edward Larrissy is Emeritus Professor of Poetry at Queen's University, Belfast, where he chaired the Advisory Board of the Seamus Heaney Centre for Poetry, and directed the major AHRC project, 'An Historical Typology of Irish Song.' He is the author, among other books, of *Yeats the Poet: The Measures of Difference* (1994), *Blake and Modern Literature* (2006), and *The Blind and Blindness in Literature of the Romantic Period* (2007). He has edited *Romanticism and Postmodernism* (1999), *W. B. Yeats: The Major Works: Oxford World's Classics* (2001) and *The Cambridge Companion to British Poetry, 1945 to 2010* (2015). He is a Member of the Royal Irish Academy.

Francis O'Gorman is Saintsbury Professor of English Literature at the University of Edinburgh. He has written or edited twenty-three books, most recently *The Cambridge Companion to John Ruskin* (2015), *Worrying: A Literary and Cultural History* (Bloomsbury, 2015; paperback 2016), Trollope's *The Way We Live Now* (Oxford World's Classics, 2016), and the 21st-Century Oxford Authors *Algernon Charles Swinburne* (2016). His edition of volume five of the *Selected Prose of Edward Thomas* will be published by Oxford University Press in 2017). His research has been supported by the British Academy, the Italian Cultural Institute, the British Association for Victorian Studies, and the Arts and Humanities Research Council.

Wit Pietrzak is assistant professor in the Institute of English Studies, University of Łódź. He specializes in modernist and neo-modernist poetry and has published several books of criticism, most recently *"Levity of Design": Man and Modernity in the Poetry of J. H. Prynne* and *Ostrożnie, poezja. Szkice o współczesnej poezji anglojęzycznej* [*Careful, Poetry. Essays on English-Language Poetry*]. His monograph *W. B. Yeats's Critical Thought* is coming out later this year.

Jane Potter is Reader in Arts at Oxford Brookes University. Her research and teaching focuses on book and literary history, with a special interest in the First World War. Her publications include *Boys in Khaki, Girls in Print: Women's Literary Responses to the Great War 1914–1918* (OUP 2005; paperback 2007), *Wilfred Owen: An Illustrated Life* (Bodleian Library Publishing, 2014), and with Carol Acton, *Working in a World of Hurt: Trauma and Resilience in the Narratives of Medical Personnel in Warzones* (Manchester University Press, 2015). She is editor of the *Selected Letters of Wilfred Owen: New Edition* (OUP) and *A Cambridge History of World War One Poetry* (CUP), both forthcoming.

Anthony Roche is a Professor Emeritus in the School of English, Drama and Film at University College Dublin. He is the author of *Synge and the Making of Modern Irish Drama* (Carysfort Press, 2013), *Brian Friel: Theatre and Politics* (Palgrave, 2011), *The Cambridge Companion to Brian Friel* (2006), and *Contemporary Irish Drama: from Beckett to McGuiness* (Gill and Macmillan, 1995; 2nd ed. Palgrave, 2009). His most recent book is *The Irish Dramatic Revival 1899–1939* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015). He was director of the Synge Summer School from 2004–2007, editor of the *Irish University Review* from 1997 until 2002, and hosted the Irish triennial conference of IASIL in 2007.

W. Anthony Sheppard is Professor of Music at Williams College where he teaches courses in twentieth-century music, opera, popular music, and Asian music. He earned his B.A. at Amherst College and his M.F.A. and Ph.D. from Princeton University. His first book, *Revealing Masks: Exotic Influences and Ritualized Performance in Modernist Music Theater* received the Kurt Weill Prize; his article on *Madama Butterfly* and film earned the ASCAP Deems Taylor Award, and his article on anti-Japanese World War II film music was honored with the Alfred Einstein Award by the American Musicological Society. A book entitled *Extreme Exoticism: Japan in the American Musical Imagination* is forthcoming. His research has been supported by the NEH, the American Philosophical Society, and the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton. He recently completed his term as Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of the American Musicological Society* and is now Series Editor of the *AMS Studies in Music*.